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Article

Religiosity Expression Of Nahdlatul Ulama Community In Maintaining Local Cultural Tradition

Mhd Safuan,1 Sarwan,2 Zainal,3 Sabiruddin Juli,4

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang.

 $^{1} \ \underline{mhdsafuan97@gmail.com} \ ^{2} \underline{sarwanma@uinib.ac.id} \ ^{3} \underline{naldoktortkmudo@gmail.com} \ ^{4} \underline{sabiruddinphd@uinib.ac.id}$

ABSTRACT:

Along with the development of the times, disputes often arise over the understanding of amaliyah among the Islamic community, it is not uncommon for accusations of heresy to be made, under the pretext that there is no sunnah that can be used as a reference and those who often become victims are the Nahdlatul Ulama community. The purposes of this study are first, to look at the religious expressions of the Nahdlatul Ulama community. Second, to show that Nahdlatul Ulama's character that is able to have a dialogue with local culture as a form of preserving local culture. The research method used is a qualitative research method with documentation data collection techniques. The research results are: firstly, NU was founded by Islamic boarding school kiai who adhered to the four schools of thought; Maliki, Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hambali. Secondly, the religious expression of the Nahdlatul Ulama community is quite significant in making a major contribution to Indonesia's progress both in dress, practice, and education. Thirdly, Nahdlatul Ulama da'wah movements come into contact with local cultural traditions as implemented by the previous Wali Songo.

Key words: Religiosity Expression, Nahdatul Ulama, Local Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is an organization established to defend the community's religious traditions from the aggressiveness of modernist Islamic groups. NU, which was founded by the kyai, aims to maintain, preserve, empower and implement Ahlus Sunnah al-Jama'ah Islamic law based on four mazhab of thought, namely Imam Hanafi, Imam Maliki, Imam Hambali, and Imam Syafi'i (Roy Purwanto et al., 2019), but in contemporary studies there is a tendency that NU actually has its own flow of thought, namely a mazhab based on state institutions, it is even influenced by the local context (Adib, 2019)

NU has a specific goal in benefiting people, a progressive nation, and upholding the honor of human dignity (Muchtar, 2007). NU is engaged in the religious and social-community fields which have the characteristics of utilizing local traditions, developing and practicing moderate Islamic values in religious practices and addressing various religious and societal issues (Arif & Pareno, 2018) (Fuad, 2020). Even so, it cannot be said that all nahdliyin are moderate, because in fact there are also some of them who are radical (Arifianto, 2017).

The flow of Ahlus Sunnah al-Jama'ah has a positive impact on the lives of its followers. Traditional understanding of law is considered positive since it conforms to what most people believe. When using the naqli and aqli arguments, always be sure to weigh the pros and cons carefully. This understanding also includes the main issues from the aspects of Aqidah, sharia and morals. These three contain all the basic principles of Islam which mutually reinforce one another. In the societal context, NU with the concept of understanding Aswaja (Roy Purwanto et al., 2019) seeks not to immediately ban or erase every local cultural tradition that has existed in society for a long time (Pribadi, 2014), but to make this tradition a media to convey messages and inculcate Islamic values in a balanced manner based on Islamic teachings.

NU's tolerant attitude towards local traditions tend to be accused by groups claiming to be Ahlus Sunnah al-Jama'ah such as HTI, FPI, MMI, Lasykar and others as practices of containing heresy, shirk, superstition, heresy and so on (Mas 'udi, 2011). The spiral of hatred shown by fellow Ahlus Sunnah al-Jama'ah will ultimately harm Muslims, even though Islam is based on the principle of goodness, as a form of human obedience to Allah S.W.T. who will ultimately be held accountable (Enoh, 2007)

This article cannot be separated from previous studies that have been made by researchers. First, Dialectics of Islam and Culture: Nahdlatul Ulama's Cultural Da'wah, by Eka Octalia, he discusses how NU uses cultural da'wah in disseminating Islam. The author explains the intersection of culture and religion in Indonesia which has implications for the concept of NU's cultural da'wah (Librianti, 2019). This research is different from the research that the author conducted, because the author's research focuses more on the religious expression of NU members, not on cultural and religious contact.

Second, NU and the Continuity of Cultural Da'wah. Fahrur Razi's work, which focuses on discussing the pattern of developing NU da'wah that inherits da'wah pattern of the Wali Songo through a cultural approach as a strategy to disseminate Islamic values to society, and the implications of a cultural da'wah strategy as an effort to achieve prosperity (Razi, 2011). This article is different from the author's article, because basically the author focuses more on aspects of the amaliyah form of NU members in maintaining cultural traditions, not on aspects of cultural da'wah strategies.

Third, Islam Nusantara; NU's Cultural Strategy in the Midst of Global Challenges, by Taufiq Bilfagih. The focus point of this paper is how NU as an Archipelago Islam fortifies Muslims from the turmoil of globalization. In addition, he also studied seven strategies of Nusantara Islam as a form of maintaining traditions in the archipelago (Bilfagih, 2016). The difference with the author is that the focus of the author's writing emphasizes the religious features of NU members as an effort to identify the character of NU members in preserving traditions local as a warehousing da'wah, not on aspects of cultural strategy fortifying the ummah from the turmoil of globalization.

Regarding these problems, there is a call for the need as a rescue measure from the aspect of erroneous understanding of the behavior displayed by NU members. Therefore, through this writing, the author wants to convey the form of religious expression of the NU community which has become an identity in world affairs and religion.

METODE

This study uses a library research approach, which is a research approach that uses sources in the form of library materials, be it literature, books, scientific articles, magazines and other sources which are studied in depth to obtain information and answers to the problems studied. This research is descriptive analysis, which is an attempt to describe the research object as it is. In descriptive research, the researcher is the key point for creating categories and seeking explanations related to research studies. The focus of this research rests on the religious expression of the NU community. The NU community seeks to display soothing religious behavior without erasing traces of local culture that have long existed. Data collection was

carried out by examining sources relevant to the research studies that the authors conducted and then analyzed using qualitative analysis methods. This method means that the analysis departs from the data and leads to general conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

NU and Ahlussunnah Waljamaah

January 31st, 1926 was the history of the gathering of fifteen clerics from various regions at the house of Wahab Chasbullah (1988-1971) in Kertopaten Surabaya (Wajidi, 2003) (Rahim, 2013) (Farih, 2016). They are prominent scholars and are well-known for their asceticism and scholarship. In the gathering, they discussed forming an organization that could maintain the community's traditional amaliyah because of the developments that had taken place. Even so, religion was not the only consideration for these ulama to establish NU, political or nationalist considerations also influenced them to join the fight for independence (Farih, 2016).

An important figure who is often mentioned as the founder of NU is K.H Hasyim Asy'Ari (Farih, 2016) (Khuluk, 1999), although in fact the effort to establish NU was not a personal one but a collective effort of the clergy. Even so, it is understandable why K.H Hasyim Asy'Ari is more often featured, this cannot be separated from his role as the leader of Ra'is Akbar, and the charisma of his leadership has influenced the development of the NU organization in his time.

K.H Hasyim Asy'ari is known as a "servant of knowledge" (Hadi, 2018) namely a person who is never satisfied with knowledge, so that the quality of his knowledge is not doubted by many people. As a charismatic and traditionalist scholar K.H Hasyim Asy'ari has taught a lot to maintain existing cultural traditions (Hadi, 2018). This kyai is also a nationalist, he contributed to the struggle for and defending the independence of the Republic of Indonesia (Farih, 2016).

The establishment of NU aims to respond to the development of the pattern of life of Indonesian citizens which is still confusing. In addition, the formulation of NU was motivated by mental, spiritual, economic, intellectual and cadre backwardness that befell Indonesian society. Then, the concerns of Islamic boarding school, the kyai saw the rise of movements from groups that harm people who adhere to Ahlus sunnah al-Jama'ah (Roy Purwanto et al., 2019). Besides that, the clergy are worried that there will be a renewal of religious traditions according to the four mazhab of thought due to the group's misunderstanding. Therefore, the pioneering of NU has the function of bringing together the ulama to synergize in instilling traditionalist understanding (Bilfagih, 2016) (Rahim, 2013) based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

NU in maintaining the ahlussunnah waljamaah flow of thought as its ideological principle follows the teachings of Al 'Ash'ari and Al Maturidi and follows one of the schools of thought in the field of fiqh which refers to the teachings of Aj-Junaidi and Al-Ghazali in the field of Sufism (Librianti, 2019) (Roy Purwanto et al., 2019). ahlussunnah waljamaah according to Az-Zabid is an explanation or syarah of Al-Ghazali Ihya Ulumuddin that if it resonates with Ahlussunnah, he is a follower of Al-Asy'ar and Al-Maturid (Hasan, 2021). Between NU and Ahlussunnah waljamaah are interrelated and influence each other (Muslimin Abdilla, 2012)

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According to NU's understanding, there are two creeds within the mazhab, namely qauli and manhaji. The qauli view is choosing a mazhab from the existing legal aspects. Meanwhile, the manhaji view is understanding mazhab according to reason (manhaj al-fikr), which is a

process to find results (products). In this regard, NU chose Ahlussunnah waljamaah because the qauli process was not always able to solve existing problems according to the times. However, a concept of thought (manhaji) is needed as an effort of consideration to answer social problems and challenges of the times. (Zainuddin, 2015). Therefore, it can be understood that Ahlussunnah waljamaah is NU's strength as well as the pulse that is inseparable. This is because ASWAJA provides the best way with the concept of manhaj al-fikr, namely a dynamic of thinking that is continuously used and never stops.

The Diversity Pattern of NU community: Getting to know the Characteristics of NU Community

Efforts to preserve local cultural traditions are NU's da'wah strategy in instilling Islamic values in that culture. Cultural traditions are used as an effective and influential transformation tool for people who are thick with their ancestral culture. This kind of behavior is a form of accommodating NU's attitude of respecting and appreciating the prevailing culture in society. Hence, to recognize the characteristics of NU members, one can identify the patterns shown as the religious identity of the NU community. The patterns are as follows:

1. Religiosity Expression from the Tradition Aspect Point of View

One of the basic characteristics of Aswaja is culture. Any form of life can not be separated from the ties of the tradition and local wisdom. This is because culture is a place of creation for humans to fulfill their needs and organize their qualities. So that it can be said, a cultured person will definitely continue to experience good changes according to his life situation.

To balance cultural traditions, the understanding of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah is guided by the principles of fiqh (al-Muhafazhah 'ala al-qadim al-shalih wa al-Akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah), namely the preservation of the goodness inherited from the past and new creations to become better (East Java PWNU Team, 2007) In responding to tradition, Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah positions culture naturally. For the NU community, what is seen is not the tradition or culture but the values contained in that culture. NU members still maintain cultural traditions as a medium of da'wah just like the previous Wali Songo did (Razi, 2011).

NU is the most prominent Islamic organization in implementing cultural da'wah in the midst of a multi-ethnic Indonesian society (Librianti, 2019). The character of NU members from the aspect of tradition can be identified as follows:

- a. Every month which is called as Suro, NU members will hold a prayer together to ask for the safety to their Creator from the dangers that threaten them. One suro or one muharram by a handful of Javanese people is considered a sacred month and there are many taboos on it. This does not become a belief that destroys the faith so that it is trapped in shirk. But the rituals of remembrance and prayer are means of gratitude to Allah so that they are protected from things that can harm themselves, their families and society in general.
- b. Praise after the call to prayer. It is customary for the Nahdliyin people to praise the prayer before the prayer begins. This attitude is firmly attached to the people of the archipelago as a form of longing for God's beloved, namely the Prophet Muhammad SAW, in the hope of meeting the Prophet and getting intercession in yaumil akhir.
- c. Kenduri makan setalam. Kenduri is a tradition of the Hindu community, but is well received by the people of the archipelago, especially the Nahdatul Ulama. According to NU elders, kenduri has a plus, namely, it unites brothers and sisters among others and shares sustenance with anyone without discrimination. Therefore, the kenduri, which was originally an ordinary meal, was added with tahlilan and prayers for safety

according to the wishes and intentions of the host. (Fahruddin,2021) (Kurniawan, 2016)

2. NU Religiosity Expression

The religious pattern of the NU community from a religious perspective can be seen as follows:

- a. During the dawn prayer (Subh), NU members identically use the qunut prayer after bowing. Even though some people think that there is no qunut and it is considered bid'ah, however, according to NU members, qunut is a prayer to ask Allah for guidance as someone who has been given guidance by Allah. Besides that, it is also a self wasilah as a form of acknowledgment of the majesty and power of Allah and at the same time realizing that there is no power that can penetrate the power of Allah SWT. (Sugiarto, 2022). For this reason, the qunut prayer is used as an amaliyah for NU members, because it can grow the strength of faith and belief in the greatness of Allah (Nahdlatul Ulama, 2008)
- b. Istighosah and prayer routines. Activities that are ingrained in the NU community are Istighosah and prayer. Both of these activities are often carried out almost every day. As for istighotsah, it is asking for help from Allah alone. Istighosah is a form of religious spirit and can build a servant's closeness to Allah. While shalawatan is a form of flattery to the Prophet as well as a form of gratitude for the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Nahdlatul Ulama, 2013).

3. NU Educational expression

Madrasah and Islamic boarding schools are the concrete contributions of the NU community to this country. As a social organization, NU appears wise by focusing on education. The education of NU people or Nahdliyin members on average is more towards Islamic boarding schools and the cadre of scholars with the nature of studying classic books (Kitab kuning). The yellow book is a classic (religious) book inherited by the scholars of the 16-18th century AD, it was written in Arabic, not lined up, without punctuation, written on yellow paper (Pribadi, 2014) (Yusri, 2020)

With the rapid development of globalization, NU seeks to strike a balance between religious studies and worldly knowledge. Through this knowledge the scientific capacity in NU educational institutions is on parallel with other institutions. NU boarding schools are not only educational activities, but in this traditional educational institution, NU boarding school is also taking part in the social, economic, political, cultural fields, thus, these are evidence of expanding its role in society (Nahdlatul Ulama, 2017).

Furthermore, education that has the nuances of pesantren or boarding school and madrasah adheres to a character-based education system. It means, the formation of character or morals is a special criterion for the Nahdliyin community tarbiyah institutions. Then the doctrinal system that applies in Islamic boarding schools is to make values not only to be studied but must be practiced. Charismatic kyai leadership as role models is far more impressive than education which only prioritizes goals. Through the exemplary method given, the quality of education is getting better while at the same time forming self-characteristics that have good morals (akhlakul karimah) (US, 2010) (Pulungan, 2018).

History has proven that NU education has made a major contribution to the advancement of education in Indonesia (Ali Rahim, 2013). Driven by Madrasah educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools and NU schools have now the people's choice, it shows that the existence of NU education is not limited to its good names but to help educate the nation's life as stated in the 1945 Constitution. Agus Maimun emphasized that NU education has reached all over Indonesia which has contributed to the improvement to the education needed by the people of Indonesia. (Ali Rahim, 2013). According to Imam

Suprayogo, NU has positioned its tarbiyah institutions in an ethical place, namely, alternative education, participatory and complementary positions (Ali Rahim, 2013)

4. Adab or Manners Expression

The most prominent feature that is often displayed by NU members is obedience to their kyai. Whatever the form of the order from the kyai, the santri (student) will definitely carry it out even if it is beyond his ability. This attitude is a form of respect for the teacher who has taught him. Their love for the kyai is not an act of tyranny for them, but teaches them to always instill humility within themselves, so that they are free from pride. In behaving, politeness or adab is above everything such as: socializing, assemblies, hospitality, studying, eating, drinking and greeting.

NU clerics or kyai never get tired of instilling Islamic values that are friendly, modest, moral, and cultured, which are wise and prudent (Ahmad Mukafi Niam, 2017). Even though religion is noble, the procedures for preaching seem extreme, patronizing, cornering, not even respecting the differences that people make, that is just as bad (Ahmad Mukafi Niam, 2017). It's not even an exaggeration to say, this way of preaching is criticized as a radicalism movement and is considered to be able to tarnish the glory of religion itself.

Manners and adab are very important in all actions, because in essence they are the main principles that can show the merits of an organization or religion. Kyai Said emphasized that the members of Nahdathul Ulama always display peaceful and soothing behavior. (Ahmad Mukafi Niam, 2017). This is conducted as a form of realizing the uniqueness of the Indonesian state as a darussalam country that embraces one another for the sake of realizing the unity and integrity of the nation's community.

Similarly, when encountering a movement that could diminish the love for the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and Pancasila, including behavior that tends to bid'ahbikan amaliyah of a society, NU's stance must be firm and not allow this to continue to threaten the credibility of a nation. NU's task is to prevent the group's misunderstanding, not to be hostile but to embrace the people again so that they remain balanced and respect each other for the sake of creating ummatan wasatan, namely moderate ummah with a conciliatory attitude.

CONCLUSION

The religious expressions of NU members are synonymous with the identity of traditionalist and culturalist Islamic groups, such as sarongs, pecian, batik dresses, robes, turbans and sticks for NU elders or NU kyai. On the side of self-serving to Allah when carrying out the dawn prayer, NU members read the qunut prayer as praise and a request for goodness. The educational aspects of NU have the nuances of Islamic boarding schools and madrasah which are balanced with general education to master information technology to be able to keep pace. The group's ideology usually comes from Ahlu Sunnah wal-jama'ah, the dominant mazhab of thought in fiqh is the Shafi'i, one of the four ulama, namely, Hanafi, Maliki, Syafi'i, Hambali (Roy Purwanto et al., 2019). Following the thoughts of Imam Abu Mansur Al Maturid and Abu Hasan Al Asy'ar in the field of monotheism. As well as guarding Imam Al Ghazal and Imam Junaid al Baghdadi on the side of Sufism. Meanwhile, efforts to maintain the local cultural traditions of the NU congregation always obey the kyai and obey the orders given by the kyai. The prayer routine becomes a spirit for his soul. Istighosah and prayers for salvation on one Muharram and other big days. When closing the lecture using the words wallhul muwafiq ila aqwamit-thariq and wallahua'lam bisshawab

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