

Building *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaah an-Nahdliyah* Character as the Pillar of Islamic Moderation in Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

*This research aimed at identifying the Moslems character called *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaah an-Nahdliyah* (Aswaja) to strengthen the Islamic moderation in Islamic Boarding School. Islamic moderation became an important topic in developing the understanding of diversity in Indonesia. The mixed-method study depended on quantitative and qualitative data sourced from the questionnaire comprising three domains of knowledge, attitude, and the practice of Islamic moderation and in-depth interview with the students, alumni, teachers, and the leaders of Islamic Boarding School. Based on the result of unpaired t-test, the study found out that significance for the knowledge was 0.80, for the attitude was 0.03, for the practice was 0.46, while the total reached 0.36. It also unveiled that it necessary to strengthen the materials of Aswaja in building Aswaja-based Moslems characters in Islamic boarding schools. This study identified eight characters of Aswaja Moslems as the source of material and curriculum development for Islamic Moderation in Islamic Boarding School, including (1) Islamic moderation guidance; (2) the maintenance of togetherness; (3) the acknowledgment of the authorization of fiqh schools; (4) the existence of bid'ah hasanah; (5) the loyal opposition to leaders; (6) the non-liberal method; (7) non-dominance of the truth; (8) the respect to the local wisdom under the standard of ushul fiqh. This study expected to embody the spirit of religious moderation in Indonesia.*

Keywords: *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Moslem; character; Islamic Boarding School; Islamic Moderation*

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merumuskan nilai-nilai karakter muslim Aswaja An-Nahdliyah sebagai upaya untuk memperkuat moderasi Islam di Pondok Pesantren. Moderasi Islam menjadi topik penting dalam membangun pemahaman keberagaman di Indonesia. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Pengambilan data dilaksanakan dengan wawancara mendalam terhadap santri, alumni, guru dan pimpinan pesantren. Pengukuran dengan menggunakan instrumen pengetahuan, sikap dan praktik moderasi Islam dilakukan untuk mengetahui karakter Aswaja yang ada. Uji-t tidak berpasangan menghasilkan nilai sig. p untuk pengetahuan sebesar 0.80, sikap sebesar 0.03, keterampilan sebesar 0.46, dan total sebesar 0.36. Konfirmasi hasil penelitian dengan teknik unmoderate focus group yang melibatkan pengasuh pondok pesantren, kepala sekolah, guru, alumni dan santri menunjukkan bahwa perlu adanya penguatan materi aswaja dalam membentuk muslim berkarakter Aswaja dikarenakan adanya sekat pemisah keilmuan fikih dengan keilmuan akidah di pesantren. Disimpulkan bahwa ada delapan karakter muslim Aswaja yang mampu dijadikan sumber pengembangan materi dan kurikulum moderasi Islam di pesantren yaitu (1) pengawal moderasi Islam; (2) menjaga kebersamaan; (3) mengakui otoritas madzhab fikih; (4) mengakui eksistensi bid'ah hasanah; (5) loyal opposition terhadap penguasa; (6) metodologis (manhaji) tidak liberal; (7) tidak menghegemoni kebenaran; (8) menghargai kearifan lokal dengan standar ushul fiqh. Penelitian ini diharapkan mampu berkontribusi dalam mewujudkan semangat moderasi beragama di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: karakter; moderasi Islam; Muslim Aswaja An-Nahdliyah; pondok pesantren

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على شخصية المسلمين الذين يطلق عليهم أهل السنة والجماعة النهضية لتعزيز الوسطية الإسلامية في المدارس الداخلية الإسلامية. و الاعتدال الإسلامي هو موضوع مهم في تطوير فهم التنوع في إندونيسيا. و تستخدم هذه الدراسة مزيجًا من الأساليب الكمية والنوعية مع البيانات المأخوذة من استبيانات تتكون من ثلاثة مجالات: المعرفة والمواقف والممارسات الخاصة بالوسطية الإسلامية، فضلاً عن المقابلات المتعمقة مع الطلاب والخريجين والمعلمين وقادة المدارس الداخلية الإسلامية. ينتج عن اختبار t غير المزاوج قيمة sig. p للمعرفة 0.80، والموقف 0.03، والممارسة 0.46، والإجمالي 0.36. كما تبين أن هناك حاجة لتقوية مادة الأسواج في تكوين مسلمي الأسواج. و تحدد هذه الدراسة ثمانية شخصيات أسواجة مسلمة كمصدر للمواد وتطوير منهج الوسطية الإسلامية في المدارس الداخلية الإسلامية: (1) توجيه الوسطية الإسلامية، (2) الحفاظ على التماسك، (3) الاعتراف بسلطة المدرسة الفقهية، (4) الاعتراف بوجود الحسنة البدعة، (5) المعارضة المخلصة للحكام، (6) المنهجية ليست ليبرالية، (7) لا تهيمن على الحقيقة، (8) تحترم الحكمة المحلية بمعايير أصول الفقه. و يدرك هذا البحث روح الاعتدال الديني في إندونيسيا.

الكلمات الرئيسية: أهل السنة و الجماعة للنهضية؛ شخصية المسلم؛ الوسطية الإسلامية؛ المدرسة الداخلية الإسلامية.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic moderation has become a crucial discussion along the last decade (Maskuri et al., 2020). It is because of the increasing intensity of hate speech, radicalism, and extremism. (Ikhsan, 2019; Labiba, 2021). The occurring radicalism is not only concerning the mindset (Ibrahim et al., 2017) but only action, and is kept increasing (Ibrahim et al., 2017; Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2020). Based on the theology point of view, there are several aspects that might trigger radicalism-*takfiri*, such as *hakimiyah*, *al-wala wa al-bara*, and so on (Aspilhanto & Muin, 2017). Radicalism is not only limited to action committed by the believers, but also regarding the mindset on Islam itself (Rahardjo, 2017). It may appear in terms of *amaliyah ubudiyah* fiqh, *babon tasawwuf*, up to the theological field and Islamic law (Abdullah & Yani, 2009). This condition surely affects someone's mindset within a tolerant, inclusive, and moderate religious life framework. Radicalism in thoughts and action may go out of hand when untreated with care (Al-Zewairi & Naymat, 2017). The involvement of every element in preventing radical belief is very necessary (Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2020; Aspilhanto & Muin, 2017).

In this context, in order to eliminate exclusive religious communities to form, every institution needs to take a role, both as a facilitator and regulator, in helping the students to develop to the maturing process, to appreciate diversity including ethnic, cultural, and religious differences (Abdullah & Yani, 2009). Islamic Boarding School as Islamic institution plays a strategic role in initiation Islamic moderation. Islamic Boarding School is the part of cultural richness and Islamic civilization in Indonesia (Fathurrochman et al., 2019). The revitalization of the role of education in Islamic Boarding School in reinforcing the studies of *aqidah*, *tasawuf*, and social *fiqh* that functions to accommodate moderate belief is important to be done. The introductory studies show that Islamic Boarding School commonly focuses on one of the *Syariah* studies that is *fiqh*-oriented studies where *fiqh* contents are dominating, organized, and systemic. It happens in most Islamic Boarding School, especially *salaf* Boarding School (Amirudin, 2019; Labiba, 2021; Rifa'i et al., 2017).

The reality that takes place these recent years somehow supports the notion that Islamic Boarding School still unable to avoid liberalism, secularism, extremism, as well as the concept of *al-wala al-bara*, *hakimiyah*, and *takfiri* mindset, exclusive Islamic mindset, and mono-culturalism. Let alone building the character of Moderate Moslem. This surely is not a baseless statement as many alumni of Islamic Boarding School unable to display moderate attitude as expected by the curriculum of the Boarding School. Different from other *fiqh*-based studies like *Bahtsul Masail* and *fiqh* discussion forum, the alumni of Islamic boarding school surely are expected to ideally contribute or even dominate the forum. The leaders and the management of Islamic Boarding School should be able to act more moderately and make the policy, strengthen the socialization of *Pancasila*, and clarify the concept in the standing of Religion (Ibrahim et al., 2017). This attempt can be made implicitly through relevant religious language and socialization on the views upon the affinity values between religion and *Pancasila* that, in hope, would return the religious character that has always become Indonesia identity while keep staying moderate, inclusive, and (Rahardjo, 2017).

One of the belief that highlights the attitude of moderation in Indonesia is the Aswaja an-Nahdliyah. Various researches has revealed that the education of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah has the real contribution to the attempt to prevent radicalism of religion (Rifa'i et al., 2017; Saefudin & Fatihah, 2020; Syarif, 2021). The material of Aswaja with the moderate values (*tawassuth*) that keeps on being taught to the students is seen to give them a more comprehensive understanding about religion that can compromise two extreme believes, the extreme right (radical) and extreme left (liberal) (Labiba, 2021; Wahyudin, 2017).

In Indonesia, Ahlussunnah wal-Jama'ah experienced the institutionalization through the organization of Nahdatul Ulama. The belief of Aswaja is usually called with the term 'Aswaja an-Nahdliyah'. With the presence of the word of 'an-Nahdliyah', then the contextualization of the teaching of Aswaja on this research is in the community's area of *nahdliyin* in the Islamic boarding school. The graduates of the boarding school are ideally having a strong understanding of diversity. Islamic moderation has become the reality of study that must be owned by every alumni of the Islamic boarding school as one of the method of humane *dakwah*. This process, at least, requires the long time in building the Moslem with Aswaja character.

This research is expected to, at the very least, to reveal several important matters such as identifying the knowledge instruments, attitude and the practice of religious moderation in Islamic Boarding School. Based on this measurement, several concrete views on religious moderation level will soon be unraveled. The knowledge on *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* will be the main topic to be asked to 400 respondents. Attitude and religious practices as taught in *Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* (Aswaja) concept is also involved as the key aspect in formulating the measurement of religious moderation level among the students of Islamic Boarding School. The responds gained in KAP will serve as the basis of questions and in-depth information search using elaborative-confirmative interview technique on the leaders of the Islamic Boarding School, teachers, and alumni in order to identify the characteristic values of Aswaja An-Nahdliyah. The values of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character will be such a discovery that will serve as a source of reference in developing the curriculum for *Aswaja* learning as the means to enhance the spirit of religious moderation in Indonesia.

Other than formulating the characteristic values of *Aswaja* Moslem, this research also aims at responding to the challenges in Islamic moderation through a systematic educational curriculum in Islamic Boarding School. The current curriculum implemented in Islamic Boarding School has unintentionally nurtured *Aswaja* character to the students. However, the current material and curriculum in Islamic boarding school is exclusive and centralistic to the caregiver or the leader of the school. Through the values in *Aswaja* Moslem character that will be identified in this research, it is expected that it could provide a good understanding on a moderate Islamic Boarding School student. This study will also present the findings on the values of *Aswaja* Moslem character while also comparing them to the findings of previous related studies to provide in-depth analysis. This study also intends to provide a general portrayal on the learning implementation in Islamic Boarding School in nurturing a polite, humanist, nationalist, and responsible moderate Moslems.

METHOD

Qualitative approach is applied in this research. The data are collected through in-depth interviews on the students, alumni, teachers, and leaders of the Islamic Boarding School. The measurement is conducted based on several instruments, such as knowledge, attitude, and the practice of Islamic moderation in order to identify the existing *Aswaja* character. The number of respondents involved in this research is 400 selected based on the qualifications in educational background, age, and gender under the classification in the formal class within Nurul Islam Islamic Boarding School. This study is carried out in Nurul Islam Islamic Boarding School, starting from 20 August 2020 to 20 February 2021. This Islamic Boarding is one institution that can represent Islamic organization with *Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah* belief in Indonesia where thousands of the students and alumni have mingled in involved in various sector in the society. Besides, this Islamic Boarding School has become one of the center of influence regarding *Aswaja* belief in Indonesia. The instrument used in this

research are adapted from descriptive survey cross-sectional on knowledge, attitude and practice among the students towards *Aswaja* material (Saefi et al., 2020). The initial stage in developing the instrument questionnaire to measure *Aswaja* Moslem in nurturing religious moderation is by identifying the most representing variables. These variable are identified and selected based on the result of literature review upon the articles issued both in national and international journal as the main document, as questionnaire, in building *Aswaja* character. From this process, a draft of instrument questionnaire comprised 20 knowledge items, 15 attitude items, and 15 practice items is made.

Face validity is used to check if the visible scale is deemed to be a good measurement on the words composition, structure, organization, and scoring rubric (Creswell, 2012). While content validity examines the relevancy, clarity, simplicity, and the instrument completeness (Rodrigues et al., 2017). Three senior lecturers of Islamic Studies from 3 State Universities in Indonesia are involved to analyze the initial instrument draft. Content validity is determined both in quantitative and qualitative manner. The experts are required to give a label ranging from 1= not useful or essential, 2=useful but not essential, and 3=essential in every item, and then provide explanation, either I the form of comments or suggestions for improvement. The scores got from all the experts are calculated and classified using Content Validity Item (CVI) approach, and if the value of the item is $CVI > 0.79$ then it should be maintained, 0.70-0.79 means require revision, and < 0.70 means refused (DeVon et al., 2007). The approach used is 5 points Likert scale with the score ranging from 1= very disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree and 5= very agree.

In order to gain a comprehensive analysis, this research also conducts confirmation on the findings using interview model of unmoderated focus group. This unmoderated focus group involves the leader of the Islamic Boarding School, headmaster, and teachers in Nurul Islam Boarding School Jember. One focus group comprises 3 people with 5 groups in total (2 caregiver group and headmaster, and 3 teacher group) to discuss and record their opinions regarding *Aswaja* learning that has been implemented, as well as identify the potential solution to every challenges in building Moslems with *Aswaja* character that is faced by the Islamic Boarding School. After all the process above, the researcher then interpret the research findings in several points of the ideal characters of *Aswaja* Moslems to be applied later as the reference in developing *Aswaja* learning curriculum.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Knowledge, Atitudes and Practice (KAP) of *Aswaja* An-Nahdliyah

The testing on the knowledge, attitudes and practice of the students in exercising the teaching of *Aswaja* an-Nahdliyah in the Nurul Islam of Jember shows that to be a Muslim with *Aswaja* character, it requires a strong understanding upon the teachings of Islam. About the knowledge of *Aswaja*, the students had the same understanding. The study found out that 98% of the students have the understanding on *Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah* is a group that follow and hold strongly to the *Sunnah* of Prophet PBUH and the *Sunnah* of *Khulafaur Rasyidin* as his successors. Meanwhile, 2% of them do not understand of it. In term of Islamic knowledge, the concept of *Aswaja* is a teaching that is not considered correct by most of the Islamic society in the world (Amirudin, 2019; Labiba, 2021; Wahyudin, 2017). This also expresses that the fellows of the *Aswaja* belief in this case is called as the Muslim with *Aswaja* an-Nahdliyah character who also uphold the values of humanity, tolerance and acknowledgement upon the legitimate government. From the data above, it can be concluded that the Islamic moderation can be shaped with the power of mind and the knowledge owned

by every Muslims. The detailed information of the students' knowledge of Aswaja are available in Table 1.

Table 1. Respons to knowledge items ($n = 20$ items)

No.	Questions	Correct Answer		Wrong Answer	
		Freq (n)	%	Freq (n)	%
K1	<i>Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah</i> is a group that follows and hold dearly the <i>Sunnah</i> of Prophet PBUH and the <i>Sunnah</i> of <i>Khulafaur Rasyidin</i> as his successor.	392	98	8	2
K2	<i>Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah</i> is the group that saved and blessed or the <i>al-firqah al-najiyah</i>	368	92	32	8
K3	The materials covered in the teaching Aswaja are the <i>aqidah</i> , <i>syari'ah</i> (<i>fiqh</i>) and <i>tasawuf</i> .	335	83,75	65	16,25
K4	<i>Al-Asy'ari</i> and <i>al-Maturidi</i> are not the founders of <i>Ahlussunnah wa-Jama'ah</i> ; there is no one at all might claim the title as the founders of <i>Ahlussunnah wa-Jama'ah</i> ; there are only <i>ulama</i> who reformulate the teachings of Islam, after the birth of several beliefs and branches that attempt to blur the pure teachings of <i>Rasulullah</i> and the <i>Shahabah</i> .	234	58,5	166	41,5
K5	The purity of Allah (<i>tanzih</i>) is a basic of the <i>Madzhab al-Asy'ari</i> in <i>Tauhid</i> specifically, and in the issue of <i>aqidah</i> generally.	221	55,25	179	44,75
K6	<i>Akidah al-Asy'ari</i> covers several points: the purity of Allah from <i>Tasybih</i> ; Purity Allah from <i>tajsim</i> ; the Purity of Allah from the dimension, direction, and location; The Purity Allah from the novelty (<i>huduts</i>) and its characteristics, such as static and dynamic	309	77,25	91	22,75
K7	Referring to <i>Madzhab Fiqh</i> and <i>taqlid</i> in Islam is important because everyone is able to perform <i>ijtihad</i> directly to Al-Qur'an and <i>al-Sunnah</i>	379	94,75	21	5,25
K8	The organization of NU and its fellows take more opinion from <i>madzhab Syafi'i</i> tha' from other <i>madzhab</i>	350	87,5	50	12,5
K9	<i>Bid'ah hasanah</i> is new activity that did not exist in the era of <i>Rasulullah</i> PBUH, but it has the foundation from the <i>dalil syari'at</i>	280	70	120	30
K10	The majority of <i>ulama</i> acknowledge the presence of <i>bid'ah hasanah</i>	247	61,75	143	35,75
K11	The good tradition will be accepted by the <i>ulama</i> although it had never been practiced by <i>Rasululluah</i> and the <i>Shahabah</i>	268	67	32	8
K12	Performing <i>tasawuf</i> is important because the point of <i>tasawuf</i> is about purifying the heart, maintaining the spiritual knowledge that is practiced and practice based on the knowledge	395	98,75	5	1,25
K13	The organization of NU and the fellows of NU in performing the <i>tasawuf</i> follow <i>al-Ghazali</i> and <i>al-Junaid al-Baghdadi</i>	379	94,75	21	5,25
K14	The character of Aswaja of NU are <i>tawassuth</i> , <i>tawazun</i> , <i>i'tidal</i> , and <i>tasamuh</i>	398	99,5	2	0,5
K15	<i>Al-tawassuth</i> means that it is not extreme to the right or left	256	64	144	36
K16	<i>Al-tawazun</i> means the balance in all aspects, including the use of <i>dalil naqli</i> , or <i>dalil</i> from al-Qur'an and <i>as-Sunnah</i> and the <i>dalil 'aqli</i> or the logical argumentation	330	82,5	70	17,5
K17	<i>I'tidal</i> means straight and strict, that the faithful person always upholds truth and that hatred to a certain people may not make them act unjustly	170	42,5	230	57,5
K18	<i>Al-tasamuh</i> is the appreciation of the difference and the respect to the person who has the difference of life principles, however it does not mean that there will be recognition or the justification upon the different faith	227	56,75	173	43,25
K19	<i>Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah</i> does not allow the act of retaliation against the legitimate government	380	95	20	5
K20	<i>Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah</i> must be loyal to the government while keep showing effort in giving advice and <i>amar makruf nahi munkar</i> to the authorities	340	85	60	15

Beside the survey on the knowledge of the students upon the values of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah, was also done. Fifteen items were constructed to measure the intended values. One of them was teaching other parties who considered *bid'ah amaliyah* of Aswaja that become one instrument of maturity of attitude for the Muslims of Aswaja in Indonesia. From the data, we know that 99% of the respondents or 396 students have the loyalty on the

Pancasila, Constitution of Republic of Indonesia of 1945, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. In Islamic boarding school, there are still 0.75% of the students who are still hesitant to be loyal to the nation and 0.25% of them even disagree. The information on the students' attitude is available in Table 2.

Table 2. Respons to attitudes items ($n = 15$)

No.	Question	Disagree		Not Sure		Agree	
		Freq (n)	%	Freq (n)	%	Freq (n)	%
A1	Loving the belief of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah that has been taught by the Islamic boarding school	6	1,5	43	10,75	351	87,75
A2	Exercising the <i>amaliyah</i> of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah in the daily life with full responsibility	5	1,25	30	7,5	365	91,25
A3	Obeying the teachings and the traditions of the <i>amaliyah</i> of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah	8	2	12	3	380	95
A4	Spread the teaching of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah in the society	12	3	18	4,5	370	92,5
A5	Choosing the open debate method publicly to deal with the group outside of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah	2	0,5	44	11	354	88,5
A6	Owning the skill to write <i>kitab</i> , article, essays and argumentation to deal with the group out of the Aswaja an-Nahdliyah	3	0,75	21	5,25	376	94
A7	The successors of the effort and <i>dakwah</i> of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah that is militant and fully committed	3	0,75	68	17	329	82,25
A8	Prioritizing the character of tolerant in dealing with accusation and 'attack' from the group outside of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah like <i>Wahabi</i> , <i>Syiah</i> and the liberal group	1	0,25	80	20	319	79,75
A9	Educating the parties that believe <i>bid'ah amaliyah</i> of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah like <i>tahlilan</i> , <i>maulidan</i> , <i>manaqiban</i> and so on.	3	0,75	8	2	389	97,25
A10	Educating the parties who criticize the good tradition, Islamic tradition, or the local wisdom like <i>neloni</i> , <i>tingkepan</i> , the commemoration of the disease on the day 7, 40, 100 or other activities that does not go against the teachings of Islam	4	1	76	19	320	80
A11	Respective people of other religions	1	0,25	76	19	323	80,75
A12	Respective fellows Muslims of other group of Aswaja an-Nahdliyah	12	3	54	13,5	334	83,5
A13	Showing loyalty towards the Pancasila, Constitution of Indonesia of 1945, <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i> and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia	1	0,25	3	0,75	396	99
A14	Agreeing on the democratic system applied in Indonesia	2	0,5	42	10,5	356	89
A15	Supporting every legitimate head of governance	2	0,5	9	2,25	389	97,25

If we observe this further through discussion and confirmation, it shows the fact that the hesitation in showing the nationalism is because of the background of understanding about the religion that is still exclusive. The data above shows that the Muslims with Aswaja character reflects not only the attitude of Islamic moderation, but also having the sympathetic attitude of nationalism. This is also supported with the spirit of Aswaja Muslim in supporting every legitimate head of the governance to run the governance wheels according to the constitution (Ikhsan, 2017b). While the daily practice of the Muslim with Aswaja character can be observed from the data Table 3 that shows the response of the students upon the practice of teaching the character of Aswaja.

Table 3. Respons to practices items ($n = 15$)

No.	Question	Never		Rarely		Always	
		Freq (n)	%	Freq (n)	%	Freq (n)	%
P1	Keeping the diversity in practicing religion and cultures as the representation of the <i>Aswaja An-Nahdliyah</i> belief.	12	3	33	8,25	365	91,25
P2	Using the more methodological way (<i>Manhaji</i>) in taking decision, especially on things related to the teachings of religion.	20	5	67	16,75	313	78,25
P3	Practicing the rule of <i>Fiqh</i> based on the mazhab of Syafi'i, by still acknowledging the mazhab of Maliki, Habari and Hambali correctly and according to the teachings of Islamic boarding school.	11	2,75	70	17,5	319	79,75
P4	Acting moderate and tolerant upon the various aspects of life and refuse the belief of liberalism.	9	2,25	60	15	331	82,75
P5	Conducting the Islamic tradition that applied in the middle of the society like <i>tahlilan</i> , <i>manaqiban</i> , <i>maulidan</i> , and other activities that does not go against the teachings of Islam.	8	2	34	8,5	358	89,5
P6	Showing loyalty upon the legitimate government as the representation of the <i>Aswaja An-Nahdliyah</i> belief.	8	2	39	9,75	353	88,25
P7	Acknowledging that The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is the legitimate government according to Islam.	0	0	1	0,4	399	99,6
P8	Believing that Islam is the one true religion.	1	0,25	6	1,5	393	98,25
P9	Actively conducting the protection on the development of the moderation of Islam in Indonesia.	11	2,75	61	15,25	328	82
P10	Acknowledging the absolute truth is held by Allah SWT and the human truth is relative and based on mere knowledge.	1	0,25	1	0,25	398	99,5
P11	Not hesitate in following any study on the <i>Aswaja An-Nahdliyah</i> in adding the richness of knowledge.	9	2,25	5	1,25	386	96,5
P12	Always prioritize scientific discussion in dealing and solving problem.	9	2,25	5	1,25	386	96,5
P13	Considering that the tradition of <i>Aswaja An-Nahdliyah</i> belief existing in the society of Indonesia is already according to teaching of Islam.	7	1,75	3	0,75	390	97,5
P14	Actively keeping and preserving the local wisdom and original culture of the area that do not go against the teachings of Islam.	6	1,5	7	1,75	387	96,75
P15	Position Pancasila as the ideology of the nation and do not go against the spirit of the Islamic teaching of <i>Aswaja An-Nahdliyah</i> .	5	1,25	19	4,75	376	94

As the nation that respects the freedom of practicing religion and praying according to their belief, Indonesia is a nation with the biggest risk of religion conflict in Southeast Asia (Hanafi & Ikhsan, 2019; Kurnia et al., 2021; Masuda & Yudhistira, 2020). As the nation that respects the freedom of practicing religion and praying according to their belief, Indonesia is a nation with the biggest risk of religion conflict in Southeast Asia (Fathurrochman et al., 2019).

Characteristics of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Moslem* to strengthen Islam Moderation

After the researcher measure the level of moderation of the students with the indicator of *Aswaja Moslem*, then focus group discussion is done using the interview technique upon the leaders of Islamic boarding school, headmaster, teachers, alumni, and students of Nurul Islam Boarding School of Jember. In the in-depth discussion, there are at least eight characteristics of Moslems with *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character that are able to create the Islamic moderation attitude. Table 4 displays the character of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Moslem*.

Table 4. Moslem with *Aswaja* Character

No.	Characteristic of <i>Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Moslem</i>
1.	Keeper and protector of Islamic moderation.
2.	Keeping the togetherness
3.	Acknowledging the authority of <i>Mazhab Fiqh</i>
4.	Acknowledging the existence of <i>bid'ah hasanah</i>
5.	Loyal opposition upon the leader
6.	Methodological (<i>Manhaji</i>), non-liberal
7.	Does not over generalizing
8.	Respect the local wisdom based on the standard of <i>Ushul Fiqh</i>

Those eight characters of *Aswaja Moslem* above become a starting point in strengthening the Islamic moderation in Indonesia. The research done by (Hanafi et al., 2021) mentioned that Islamic boarding school has a central role in the development of the national attitude, moderation and tolerance as supported by the result of the research of (Ikhsan, 2017b, 2019). Here are the explanation of the characteristics of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Moslem*.

Keeper and Successor of Islamic Moderation

Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Moslem understands, practices and escorts the moderation as the main character of Islamic teaching (Maskuri et al., 2020). Moderate or *Wasath* is a general character of all sharia laws. It is the middle, in a sense, of rendering it difficult (*tasydid*) and easy (*takhfif*). Most of sharia laws have moderate characteristics, not absolutely easy and not absolutely hard (*ii la 'ala muthlaq al takhfif wa la 'ala muthlaq al-tasydid*). An *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Moslem* believes that Islam is religion of easiness, not an extreme or beyond limit one. An *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Moslem* is called as the keeper and the successor of Islamic moderation because Prophet Muhammad once said that the extreme groups are going to die or extinct. Thus, if Islam is an everlasting teaching, then that means that the escorting the teaching to the eternity is the moderation (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Based on the measuring result on *Aswaja* knowledge (table 1, table 2, and table 3). 99.5% of the students at Nurul Islam boarding school of Jember believe that the *Aswaja* character of NU is moderate (*tawassuth*), balanced (*tawazun*), strict (*I'tidal*) and tolerant (*tasamuh*). Meanwhile, only 0.05% of them who do not believe in it. Moderate, in their opinion, is following the extreme right of left. Meanwhile, balanced means the balance in all aspects, including in using *Dalil Naqli*, or the *dalil* from Al-Quran and *as-Sunnah* and *Dalil 'aqli* or logical argumentation. The principle in using the *dalil* here is the guideline for the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, in theology, *Fiqh*, and *tasawuf*.

The students of Nurul Islam boarding school of Jember understand material of the teaching of *Aswaja* covers the *aqidah*, syari'ah (*Fiqh*) and *tasawuf*. Then, they also understand that *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* in theology follows the *aqidah* of al-Asy'ari and al-Maturidi (88.75%), while in *tasawuf* *Aswaja* follows al-Junaid al-Baghdadi and Abu Hamid

al-Ghazali. Those names represent the center of moderate ulama and they have the balance in the use of *dalil Naqli* and *aqli* in their own fields of study. Following their principles of *aqidah* does not mean that we cut ties with the teaching of prophet Muhammad because an *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah Moslem* knows that al-Asy'ari and al-Maturidi are not pioneer of *Ahlussunah wal jama'ah*; no one was mentored at the pioneer of the *Ahlussunah wal jama'ah*; there are only those ulama who reformulated the Islamic teaching, after the raise of several believes and branches of the religious teaching that tried to blur the teaching of Rasulullah and his pure hearted fellows

The knowledge that *Ahlussunah wal jama'ah* is the group that survive or the *al-firqah al-najiyah* here is then proved on the attitude. The students of Nurul Islam boarding school of Jember love the belief of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* in the daily life with full responsibility. In line with that, the research by Maskuri et. al. (2020) highlighted that in the attempt of teaching *Aswaja*, the commitment in spreading the teaching off *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* in the society and using the method of open debate in the public in dealing with the groups outside of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* become the parameter of understanding of someone. Then, in ten of practices, students of Nurul Islam boarding school of Jember have the active role in escorting the Islamic moderation in Indonesia. They are not hesitant in following the studies in understanding the teaching of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* more to add to their richness of knowledge and to always prioritize scientific discussion in dealing and solving issues in the society. As mentioned in the research of (Fathurrochman et al., 2019; Saefudin & Fatimah, 2020)

Maintaining the Togetherness

The principle of this character is the hadist of Rasulullah about the good side of maintaining the togetherness (*al-jama'ah*), where this weird refer to the act of keeping the togetherness and peace among others. The difference among fellows should not bring us to claim others as infidel, *bid'ah*, and heathens. Therefore Moslem with *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character will avoid things that risk on separation, that is the perspective of takfiri; any claim that saying the fellows of Asy'ari ('*Asy' ariah*) and Maturidi (*Maturidiyah*) are not those of *Ahlussunah wal jama'ah*, such claim that accuse others as the *bid'ah* and that any *bid'ah* is wrong, the suspects deserves hell.

The confirmation of the research indicates that in terms of knowledge, 98% of students of Nurul Islam of Jember identify *Ahlussunah wal jama'ah* as the group that follow and hold dearly the sunnah of prophet Muhammad PBUH and *sunnah* of *al-Khulafa al-Rasyidun* after Him. This differs from most Syiah group that is antipathy upon the three of *khulafaurasyidin*, Abu Bakar, Umar, Utsman and different from the *Khawarij* group that is antipathy upon the fourth *Khulafaurasyidin*, Ali bin Abi Thalib. Acknowledging the leadership and sunnah of the four *Khulafaurasyidin* is actually the thing that makes *Aswaja* as the group of togetherness.

The research by Ikhsan (2019) in university discovers results in line with the research in Islamic boarding school, prioritizing the attitude of tolerant in dealing with accusation and 'attack' from the group outside of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* like *Wahabi*, *Syiah*, and liberal group and also commit to keep the togetherness in practicing religion and cultures as the representation of Islamic teaching in being the important pillars in creating religious moderation.

Acknowledging the authorization of Mazhab Fiqh

Moslems with *Aswaja* acknowledge the authority of *Mazhab Fiqh*. They refer to law from al-Quran and hadits and according to the understanding of the results of the *ijtihad* of the Ulama of mazhab, Maliki, Syafi'i, Hanafi, and Hanbali. Moslem with *Aswaja* characters

has *Taqlid* or follow one of the four mazhab. Most four ulama of mazhav stated that people who failed to *istinbath* from al-Quran and Hadits or Prophet PBUH directly must *tawlid* to an imam or follow a certain mazhab. According to the research, it shows that the students of Nurul Islam boarding school of Jember stated that holding to *Mazhab Fiqh* and *taqlid* in Islam is important because not everyone can perform *ijtihad* directly from al-Quran and al-Sunnah. This is also supported with the results of measuring research of Moslem attitude of *Aswaja* with 94.75 % following the existing *Mazhab Fiqh*. At the fellows of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, they stated that NU organization and the people of it follows the mazhab of Syafi'i than other mazhab. Although they still acknowledge the mazhab of Maliki, Hanafi, and Hambali properly and according to the teaching of Islamic boarding school. The tolerance of religion practices can be shaped perfectly if they acknowledge the authority of *Mazhab Fiqh* as the guidelines in interpreting al-Quran (Labiba, 2021).

Acknowledging the Existence of *bid'ah hasanah*

Following the statement of most ulama of four mazhab, Moslem with *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character acknowledge the existence of *bid'ah hasanah*. It means, not all *bid'ah* are wrong and not all of the practitioners of *bid'ah* belong to hell, as seen by the minority of ulama and fellows of Islam. Moslem of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, in this case, follow the statement of the founder of NU, KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari who divided *bid'ah* into two categories, *bid'ah hasanah* (good), and *bid'ah sayyi'ah* (bad). Even KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari also quoted from the ulama that *bid'ah* had six categories, compulsory, *sunnah*, *makruh*, *khilaf al-aula*, *haram* and *mubah*. According to the research, it shows that in term of knowledge, 70% of students of Nurul Islam boarding school of Jember stated that the *bid'ah hasanah* is the new act that did not exist in the Era of Rasulullah, but it has the foundation of our *dalil* syariat. They know that most ulama acknowledge *bid'ah hasanah*. They show their knowledge in this aspect shown in their attitude and action, with the readiness in educating the parties who consider *bid'ah amaliah* of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* like *tahlilan*, *maulidan*, *manaqiban* and many others. This culture has become part of the social life. Islam lives as the existing culture (Ikhsan, 2017a).

Loyal Opposition Upon the Authorities

Acting loyal to the legitimate government, in a sense to have the loyal attitude and showing the support and obedience to the government. Several *dalil* that become the guideline of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* explain that a Moslem must be loyal to the government. This is different from the group of *Khawarij* or Neo *Khawarij* that one of their knowledge on *Ammar Makruf Nahi Munkar* (the transliteration of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahyi 'an al-munkar*) identity this as mutiny. However, the loyalty of *Aswaja* Moslem is not absolute and unlimited like the people of Syiah to their imams. *Aswaja* has the attitude of 'opposition' that is showed by giving advice and *amar makruf nahi munkar* to the authorities. This understanding is explained in several *dalil*, where the point of *amar makruf nahi munkar* to the authorities does not mean to retaliate or out of the leadership. This explanation supports the conclusion that Moslem of *Aswaja* prioritizes public condition and stability. Even up to the extent of strict advice, *Aswaja* requires it to be delivered and blood not causing negative impact to the public.

The result of the research shows that the students of Nurul Islam boarding school of Jember have the knowledge about this thing. 98% of the respondents mentioned that *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* does not allow retaliation to the legitimate government. *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* must be loyal to the government while keep trying to give good advice and *amar makruf nahi munkar*. This is in line with research of (Amirudin. 2019; Ikhsan, 2017b) where they do not mind about the legitimate democratic system, supporting

every head of governance and acting loyal to the legitimate government and placing Pancasila as the national ideology that does not go And against the spirit of Islam and is part of nationalism.

Methodological (*Manhaji*), non-Liberal

Moslem of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* has the standard in framework and method in establishing syariah law or *istinbath al-ahkam*. With that, the free perspective that does not bound to the method of establishing law is not acknowledged as valid by the Moslem of *Aswaja*. The methodology that assure the rules of the principle, *Fiqh* holds to the methodology of Imam Abu Hasan al-Asyari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (*'ala ma 'alayhi al-Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ary wa al-Imam abu Mansur al-Maturidy*); meanwhile in *tasawuf*, according to the method of *al-Imam al-Ghazal wa al-Junaid al-Baghdadi* (*'ala manhaj al-Imam al-Ghazali wa al-Junaid al-Baghdadi*). Moslem of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* admits that the Islamic teachings are divided into two categories, the static teaching (*syaqqun tsabit, or qath'i*) and dynamic teachings (*syaqqun mutaghayyir, or ijthadi*). The static teachings (*tsabit*) is the teaching that may not be altered and may not be conditioned according to the time and place, these teachings are about the aspects of theology (*ahkam 'aqa 'idiyah*), the cores aspects of the praying (*ahkam 'amaliyah*) and the core aspects of characters (*ahkam tahdzibiyah*).

If the liberalization of religion lowered the belief that Islam is considered as the historical religion, then to believe that al-Qur'an is a product of culture (*muntaj tsaqafi*), until assuring that the deconstruction of authentic concept and the finality of al-Qur'an, then the teachings of liberalism of such does not belong anywhere for the Moslem of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* seem from the principles they hold dearly. The mindset of tolerant (*fikrah tasamuiyah*) that is used by the *Aswaja* is not identical with the liberalism. The Moslem of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* can live side by side peacefully with other parties although in term of *aqidah*, mindset, and culture are different. However, to life side by side does not mean that they agree on the different and wrong *aqidah* or mindset and culture.

The result of the research shows that the people with strong faith always uphold the truth and that the hatred to a certain people may never act unjust. The tolerance of al-tasamuh is the appreciation upon the difference and respect to the people who have different life principles, but it does not mean that they acknowledge or justify upon different beliefs. Parallel with the knowledge, in the practice they commit using the methodological way (*Manhaji*) in taking decision, especially on things related to religious teachings, acting moderately and tolerant upon various of life and refuse the liberal belief and believe that Islam is the one true religion as supported so of the research performed by Hanafi and Ikhsan (2019).

Respecting Differences does not dominate the truth

Although living among differences, Moslem of *Aswaja* believes that differences is granted. Differences among human are there for a certain purposes, one of it is to test human, to see who can race the furthest in chasing goodness. Therefore, the things needed to be done is to treat the differences, not to omit the differences. Conceptually, the differences are two, the difference based on religious principles (*Ushul*) and the difference the branch of non-religious principles (*furu'*). The difference in term of *Ushul* must be treated with dakwah, whether it is to be accepted by the audience of dakwah or not. Meanwhile, the difference in term of *furu'* must be treated by respecting each other that is interpreted in four attitudes, those are: (1) not being fanatic on their opinion (*'adam al-ta'ashsub*), (2) Does not hyperbolize the differences, including do not treat something *furu'* to become *Ushul* (*'adam*

tadlkhim al-khilaf), (3) The belief that this difference does not affect negatively (*al-khilaf la yadhur*), (4) The belief that difference in media is allowed (*al-khilaf fi al-wasail mubah*).

The confirmation of the result of research showed that 83.5% of the students of Nurul Islam Boarding School of Jember mentioned to respect the Islamic group outside of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*, the method of debating to treat the group outside the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* can still be done properly and still holding dearly on the teaching of moderation and the teaching of harmony. The difference does not decide the relationship of brotherhood and communication. Dealing with the group outside of *Aswaja*, the debate can only be done when needed and is not the only way in spreading *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah*. The respect upon differences is a requirement of religious tolerance (Ikhsan, 2017a).

Respecting the Local Wisdom with the Standard of *Ushul Fiqh*

The Moslem of *Aswaja* sees Islam not as the religion of tradition, but not always the anti-tradition religion. A space that becomes the object of Islamic dakwah, of course it is not an “empty space” with no one inside. There must be people with all the tradition that has been passed down for generations. *Ushul Fiqh* divides cultures into two, good tradition (*'urfun shahih*) and bad tradition (*'urfun fasid*). Good tradition will be accepted that something that has been known by most people, as spoken and action, that is legitimized by the syariah, so it does not render the haram things into halal and does not cancel the compulsory ones, or when syariah does not discuss about it, which is something that is dynamic and changing. Related to the method, Moslem of *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* has the way or methodology in treating, also known as the method of dakwah by amputating, assimilating, and minimization.

The findings in the research shows 98% of the respondents finding out that the good tradition will be accepted by the ulama although it has never been practiced by Rasulullah PBUH and the *Shahabah*. This knowledge is shown in the attitude of obeying the teaching and tradition of amaliyah that applies in *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah*, the readiness in giving the understanding to parties that criticizing the good tradition, Islamic tradition, or the local wisdom such as *neloni*, *tingkepan*, commemoration of the deceased on 7th, 40th, and 100th days and other activities that does not go against the Islamic teaching. Meanwhile, actively contributing to keep and preserve the local wisdom and the original culture of the region that does not go against the Islamic teaching is the representation of the communal commitment and appreciating the local wisdom (Wahyuni, 2012).

If it is seen further, the concept of Islamic moderation that is shown in the Moslem character of *Aswaja* here leans to the theory of moderation that is the tolerance among religious fellows, spirit of nationalism and respecting the local wisdom (Karwadi & Daimah, 2019; Saefudin & Fatihah, 2020; Siswanto, 2020). This research finds the significant difference between the female and male students in putting meaning to knowledge, attitude and practice of their *Aswaja*.

Table 5. Gender Based Difference Test

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge	Male	203	86.0493	9.42755	.66168
	Female	197	82.0711	9.38437	.66861
Attitude	Male	203	60.9360	7.04939	.49477
	Female	197	58.3503	6.80217	.48463
Skill	Male	203	64.6502	6.70162	.47036
	Female	197	62.7360	6.66099	.47458
Total	Male	203	211.6355	18.83133	1.32170
	Female	197	203.1574	19.22293	1.36958

Table 6. Result of gender based t-test

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Knowledge	Equal var assumed	.001	.970	4.229	398	.000	3.97820	.94074
	Equal var not assumed			4.229	397.742	.000	3.97820	.94067
Attitude	Equal var assumed	.075	.784	3.731	398	.000	2.58571	.69295
	Equal var not assumed			3.733	397.987	.000	2.58571	.69258
Skill	Equal var assumed	.000	.982	2.865	398	.004	1.91421	.66824
	Equal var not assumed			2.865	397.771	.004	1.91421	.66818
Total	Equal var assumed	.136	.712	4.456	398	.000	8.47811	1.90273
	Equal var not assumed			4.454	396.982	.000	8.47811	1.90332

Based on the result of the test using the independent t-test as shown on Table 5 and Table 6, it is gained that the significance score for the knowledge is 0.000, the attitude is 0.000, the skill is in 0.004, and the total is in 0.000, then it could be stated that the component of knowledge, attitude, skill, and the total has a real difference between the male and female students, where the males are better in term of knowledge, attitude, skill, and total, with the assumption of score of $p < 0.05$, then it can be stated to have a real difference. Even in this case, all score of p is less than 0.01, which means in the better level of significance, with the trust level of 99%.

This condition shows that the Islamic moderation can be shaped better on female students. This phenomena is according to the previous research that said that the females have an important role in building the moderate character in Indonesia (Amirudin, 2019; Maskuri et al., 2020; Wahyuni, 2012; Yusuf & Wekke, 2015). The spirit of Islamic moderation in Islamic boarding school becomes an important part in the attempt to protect the existence of the Islam of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* in spirit of nationalism. The findings of this research becomes the prove that Moslem with *Aswaja* character is an individual that is expected to strengthen the spirit of moderation of exercising the religion in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Moslem with the character of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyah* is a representation of knowledge, attitude and practices of moderation of exercising Islam. Islamic boarding school as one of the institution of Islamic training must gain special attention in term of teaching the Islamic moderation. Spirit of nationalism, tolerance, and respecting the local culture in the religious attitude becomes the unique characteristics of the *Aswaja* Moslem. This result of the research, at least, indicates the important role of the Islamic boarding school in creating the generation with Islamic characteristics that are religious, nationalist, independent, having integrity and broad knowledge in the practice of religion.

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