MIKAILALSYS
Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences

e-ISSN : 2987-2286
p-ISSN : 2987-3924

Index: Harvard, Boston, Sydney, Copernicus, Sinta 4, Scilit, Semantic, Google, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/mikailalsys.v4i2.10397

The Acculturation of New Santri in the Culture of Islamic Boarding Schools (A Case Study of Al-Fattahiyyah Islamic Boarding School, Boyolangu, Tulungagung)

Melati Khoirun Nikmah & Bachrul Ulum
Universitas Bhinneka PGRI Tulungagung, Indonesia
melatikhoirun@gmail.com; bachrul.id@gmail.com

Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Apr 19, 2026	May 17, 2026	May 29, 2026	Jun 3, 2026

Abstract

The diversity of social, cultural, and behavioural backgrounds among newly enrolled students in Islamic boarding schools often creates adaptation challenges, particularly in *pesantren* that integrate *salafiyah* traditions with modern educational approaches. This study aims to examine the acculturation process of new *santri* at Al-Fattahiyyah Islamic Boarding School, Boyolangu, Tulungagung, and to identify the factors influencing their successful adaptation to the *pesantren* environment. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Participants were purposively selected and included newly enrolled *santri* as primary informants, supported by *pesantren* administrators, senior *santri*, and caregivers. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that acculturation occurs gradually through several interconnected stages, including environmental introduction, social interaction, adjustment to institutional rules and routines, and the eventual acceptance and internalization of *pesantren* values. Internal factors, including age, personality,

Mikailalsys is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

motivation, and attitudes, as well as external factors, including cultural background, social environment, institutional systems, and previous experiences, significantly shape students' adaptation processes. The study concludes that acculturation among new *santri* is a dynamic sociocultural process that extends beyond institutional compliance and contributes to the internalization of religious values, discipline, independence, and social responsibility. This study contributes to Islamic education and *pesantren* studies by highlighting acculturation as a structured yet relational process of value internalization. Its practical implications emphasize the need to strengthen orientation programmes, mentoring systems involving senior *santri*, and socio-emotional support mechanisms to facilitate more effective and humane adaptation within Islamic boarding school environments.

Keywords: Acculturation; New *Santri*; Cultural Adaptation; Islamic Boarding School; *Pesantren* Socialization.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia has historically represented an integral component of the national educational landscape, serving not only as institutions of Islamic learning but also as social and cultural spaces that shape moral values, communal identities, and religious character among Muslim communities. Pesantren have survived extensive sociohistorical transformations, ranging from colonial intervention and national independence to contemporary globalization, while maintaining their educational relevance and socio-religious legitimacy (Yahya & Sahidin, 2022). Their resilience reflects the adaptive capacity of pesantren to preserve Islamic traditions while responding to evolving societal demands and educational transformations (Hailal, 2022). In the contemporary context, pesantren continue to contribute significantly to moral education, social stability, and the reproduction of Islamic intellectual traditions, positioning them as essential institutions in Indonesia's broader educational framework (Muhidin et al., 2025). The strategic role of pesantren has gained stronger institutional recognition following the enactment of Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, which formally acknowledges pesantren as an integral component of the national education system (Indonesia, 2019). The law emphasizes the educational, da'wah, and community empowerment functions of pesantren while providing recognition, facilitation, and institutional support to sustain their educational activities (Indonesia,

2019). Such recognition demonstrates the growing acknowledgment that pesantren are not merely religious institutions but complex socio-educational environments responsible for cultivating intellectual, ethical, and spiritual capacities among students.

The transformation of pesantren in Indonesia has generated two dominant typologies, namely salafiyah (traditional) and modern pesantren, reflecting institutional adaptations to contemporary educational and societal demands (Arifin, 2022). Traditional pesantren primarily emphasize the study of classical Islamic texts through methods such as sorogan, bandongan, and halaqah under the direct authority of kyai, preserving inherited scholarly traditions and interpersonal pedagogical relationships (Addina et al., 2025). Conversely, modern pesantren tend to integrate formal national curricula, structured educational systems, and contemporary management models while maintaining Islamic values and religious instruction (Nuroniyah, 2023). These typological developments indicate that pesantren are dynamic institutions capable of negotiating continuity and change within rapidly evolving social contexts. Beyond their institutional transformation, pesantren function as cultural ecosystems characterized by distinctive social norms, moral expectations, and disciplinary structures that profoundly shape students' identities and everyday experiences. Life in pesantren is typically organized around communal living, religious discipline, simplicity, obedience to religious authority, and collective responsibility, thereby creating a unique social order distinct from secular educational institutions (Fitriani et al., 2023). Students are expected to internalize values such as humility, piety, discipline, sincerity, and social solidarity through repetitive practices embedded in everyday pesantren routines (Sodikin et al., 2020). Such a system of moral and cultural socialization makes pesantren not only educational institutions but also environments of intensive character formation.

The immersive nature of pesantren culture, however, often creates adjustment challenges for newly enrolled students who originate from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. New students arrive carrying distinctive habits, worldviews, communication styles, and behavioral norms shaped by their familial, regional, and social environments, which may differ substantially from the prevailing norms of pesantren life (Mulyani et al., 2022). These differences frequently generate tension during the adaptation process because students are required to negotiate between inherited cultural values and institutional expectations embedded within pesantren traditions (Dina Salsabila et al., 2024). Consequently, adaptation within pesantren should not merely be understood as behavioral

compliance but as a broader process of cultural negotiation and identity reconstruction. In sociocultural contexts marked by cultural interaction and negotiation, the concept of acculturation becomes particularly relevant in understanding how new students gradually adjust to pesantren life. Acculturation refers to a process through which individuals or groups encounter unfamiliar cultural systems and selectively internalize new cultural elements without necessarily abandoning their original cultural identities (Elisabeth Ayuna, 2023). Rather than representing cultural replacement, acculturation constitutes a process of cultural interaction in which adaptation occurs through negotiation, reinterpretation, and selective integration of values (Setyawan & Fahrian, 2022). In educational institutions characterized by strong communal traditions such as pesantren, acculturation may significantly influence emotional adjustment, social participation, academic engagement, and identity development among students.

The acculturation process among new students in pesantren is often accompanied by various psychological and social challenges during the initial adaptation period. Many students experience forms of culture shock manifested through homesickness, emotional distress, communication barriers, resistance to institutional discipline, and difficulties adjusting to highly structured daily routines (Hestyaningsih et al., 2024). Students entering pesantren environments are frequently required to accept unfamiliar habits, including communal living, restricted privacy, intensive religious schedules, and strict disciplinary systems that may contrast sharply with previous lifestyles (Imam Bukhori & Yaqub Cikusin, 2023). Such conditions indicate that adaptation within pesantren is neither automatic nor uniform, as students experience different trajectories depending on individual characteristics, social support, and institutional responses. The complexity of acculturation becomes increasingly significant in pesantren environments characterized by cultural diversity and institutional hybridity. This issue is particularly observable in Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah, Boyolangu, Tulungagung, which represents a hybrid educational model combining salafiyah traditions with modern educational approaches. The pesantren accommodates students from multiple regional, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, creating a socially heterogeneous environment in which intercultural interaction becomes unavoidable (Buku Kepengurusan Pondok Pesantren Al Fattahiyyah, 2025). Such diversity provides opportunities for intercultural learning while simultaneously generating adaptation challenges related to communication, discipline, emotional adjustment, and social integration.

Preliminary observations indicate that newly enrolled students at Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah encounter various practical challenges during their adaptation process. Institutional regulations restricting smartphone use, demanding schedules requiring early morning religious preparation, and communal disciplinary expectations often create resistance among students who previously experienced relatively unrestricted lifestyles (Hefner, 2022). Cultural misunderstandings may also emerge from differences in communication styles, interpersonal expectations, and regional cultural norms, potentially influencing students' sense of belonging and psychological comfort during the early phases of adjustment (Dina Salsabila et al., 2024). Consequently, understanding acculturation within pesantren settings becomes increasingly important for identifying strategies capable of supporting successful adaptation and minimizing social conflict. Despite increasing scholarly attention to pesantren education, previous studies have tended to focus on fragmented dimensions of pesantren life without comprehensively examining acculturation processes among newly enrolled students within hybrid pesantren environments. Existing research has explored cultural internalization through religious learning traditions, emphasizing methods of moral transmission and educational practice in traditional pesantren settings (Maskur, 2020). Other studies have examined multicultural educational approaches and character formation but have primarily focused on institutional programs rather than the lived adaptation experiences of individual students (M. Yusuf, 2023). Similarly, literature reviews concerning new students' adaptation generally describe adjustment difficulties without systematically investigating the institutional and cultural mechanisms facilitating acculturation among culturally diverse students (Hestyaningsih et al., 2024).

Although previous studies have contributed valuable insights into pesantren culture, adaptation, and character formation, important limitations remain evident. Research on cultural internalization in pesantren has predominantly concentrated on pedagogical mechanisms, such as religious instruction and value transmission through traditional learning systems, while giving limited attention to the lived experiences of newly enrolled students navigating unfamiliar social and cultural environments (Maskur, 2020). Studies on pesantren-based multicultural education have highlighted the institutional role of diversity management and character building; however, they rarely examine how cultural diversity shapes students' day-to-day adaptation processes during the initial stages of residence in pesantren (M. Yusuf, 2023). Furthermore, investigations into the religious

traditions of Islamic boarding schools have often emphasized educational continuity and moral cultivation rather than the sociocultural negotiation experienced by new students in multicultural settings (Muttaqin et al., 2024). Previous studies concerning adaptation among new students also reveal several analytical limitations. Literature discussing the adjustment experiences of santri generally emphasizes psychological difficulties, homesickness, emotional instability, and disciplinary adaptation during the early stages of residence in pesantren (Hestyaningsih et al., 2024). Although these studies provide useful descriptions of adjustment challenges, they tend to conceptualize adaptation primarily as an individual psychological process rather than a sociocultural phenomenon shaped by interaction between institutional culture and students' cultural backgrounds. As a result, the dynamic process through which students negotiate meanings, internalize institutional values, and selectively adapt to pesantren culture remains insufficiently explored.

Similarly, studies on acculturation in Islamic educational settings frequently emphasize linguistic adaptation, curriculum transformation, or religious-cultural integration without specifically examining interpersonal and institutional mechanisms supporting students' social adjustment in pesantren environments (Fil amri et al., 2024). Existing scholarship often prioritizes macro-level institutional change while paying relatively little attention to micro-level cultural interactions involving newly arrived students. Consequently, there remains limited empirical understanding regarding how cultural adaptation unfolds within pesantren characterized by heterogeneity in students' backgrounds and hybrid educational systems. Based on these observations, the present study explicitly identifies a research gap in at least three significant dimensions. First, there remains a limited understanding of the acculturation process experienced by new santri in pesantren environments characterized by hybrid educational models combining salafiyah and modern systems. Existing studies generally focus either on traditional pesantren or institutional educational transformation without sufficiently examining the lived adaptation experiences of students navigating hybrid institutional cultures (Arifin, 2022). Second, there is still inadequate discussion concerning the interaction between internal and external factors influencing acculturation among new santri, particularly those involving social support, institutional discipline, cultural distance, and personal motivation (Amburg, 2022). Third, prior studies have not comprehensively analyzed the role of pesantren actors, including kyai, ustaz, and senior students, in facilitating or constraining the adaptation process among culturally diverse students (Nurul Qomariyah & Mohammad Darwis, 2023).

The urgency of addressing these gaps becomes increasingly important considering the challenges faced by pesantren in contemporary society. Educational institutions characterized by communal living and strong cultural norms are confronted with increasing student diversity resulting from regional mobility, social transformation, and educational expansion (Kemenag, 2023). In such circumstances, pesantren must not only preserve their traditional religious identity but also ensure that students from heterogeneous cultural backgrounds are capable of integrating successfully into pesantren life without experiencing prolonged exclusion, emotional distress, or institutional disengagement (Muhidin et al., 2025). Understanding the mechanisms of successful adaptation therefore becomes essential for sustaining inclusive educational environments and minimizing dropout risks among newly enrolled students. The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to provide a contextual and comprehensive examination of acculturation among newly enrolled santri within a pesantren characterized by both institutional hybridity and sociocultural diversity. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss pesantren adaptation through educational, psychological, or managerial perspectives, this research investigates acculturation as an interactive sociocultural process shaped by reciprocal encounters between students' cultural backgrounds and pesantren norms. Specifically, this study examines how santri negotiate cultural differences, experience adaptation stages, and construct social belonging while participating in pesantren life. In this regard, novelty is positioned not merely in the research setting but also in the analytical emphasis placed on everyday sociocultural interaction, institutional mediation, and adaptation trajectories among students in a hybrid pesantren environment.

The theoretical foundation of this study is primarily grounded in acculturation theory, which conceptualizes adaptation as an ongoing process emerging from contact between different cultural systems. Acculturation involves the interaction between existing cultural orientations and newly encountered social expectations, producing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive transformations without necessarily erasing original identities (Elisabeth Ayuna, 2023). Within pesantren environments, this framework becomes relevant for explaining how newly enrolled students gradually internalize institutional values while simultaneously maintaining aspects of their original cultural orientations. To deepen the analysis, the study also adopts Berry's acculturation strategy framework, which categorizes adaptation responses into integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, thereby providing a conceptual lens for understanding how students respond differently to

pesantren culture (Marhayati & Suryanto, 2017). This framework enables the identification of various adaptation patterns among santri, particularly regarding whether students maintain their original cultural identities, selectively integrate pesantren values, or experience social isolation during adjustment processes. Since pesantren life is highly structured and socially immersive, the variation in students' adaptation trajectories becomes an important subject of sociological inquiry.

In addition, socialization theory contributes to understanding how pesantren culture is transmitted and internalized through interaction, discipline, and collective participation. Socialization is understood as a lifelong learning process through which individuals acquire norms, values, and expected behaviors within a social environment (Lahamit, 2021). Within pesantren contexts, socialization occurs through daily routines, religious practices, interpersonal interaction, disciplinary mechanisms, and symbolic authority structures represented by kyai, teachers, and senior students. Such a framework helps explain how cultural adaptation is not only individually negotiated but institutionally facilitated. Accordingly, this study focuses on understanding the acculturation process experienced by newly enrolled santri in Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah, Boyolangu, Tulungagung, while also identifying the factors influencing successful or constrained adaptation. More specifically, the research seeks to examine how students experience cultural encounters, respond to pesantren norms, negotiate adaptation strategies, and interact with institutional actors during the process of social integration. Through this focus, the study aims to contribute empirically to sociological discussions on religious education, acculturation, and social adaptation within pesantren while simultaneously offering practical insights for improving student guidance and institutional inclusivity in Islamic boarding schools.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine the acculturation process experienced by new santri within the cultural environment of Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah, Boyolangu, Tulungagung. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to understand deeply how first-year santri adapt to the pesantren culture, including their experiences, social interactions, and adjustment to institutional values and norms. The case study design enabled the researcher to explore the

phenomenon contextually and comprehensively within a specific educational setting. Data collection began in April 2026 at Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah. The research design focused on several indicators related to the acculturation process of new santri, including initial social interaction, adaptation to pesantren regulations, behavioral change, internal and external challenges, and cultural acceptance. Initial interaction referred to communication patterns between new and senior santri, while adaptation to regulations concerned compliance with daily schedules and pesantren rules. Behavioral change included transformations in habits, language, attitudes, and routines. Internal challenges referred to personal and psychological difficulties during adaptation, whereas external challenges involved environmental and cultural differences. Cultural acceptance reflected the extent to which new santri adapted to and felt comfortable within the pesantren environment. These indicators served as the analytical basis for understanding the adaptation process experienced by participants.

Participants included first-year santri as the primary subjects, supported by pesantren representatives, administrators, and senior santri as additional informants. Participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement and relevance to the acculturation process, allowing the researcher to obtain in-depth and contextual information regarding the experiences of new santri. The researcher acted as the primary instrument in collecting and interpreting data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine social interaction, adaptation to rules, behavioral change, and cultural adjustment among santri. Interviews were used to explore participants' experiences, challenges, social relationships, and perceptions regarding pesantren culture. Documentation, including institutional records, photographs, and activity archives, supported the verification of field findings and provided contextual information regarding the pesantren environment. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data were first selected and simplified according to the research focus, then organized into descriptive forms to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were continuously verified to ensure consistency and credibility of findings. To strengthen trustworthiness, this study applied source and technique triangulation, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and member checking to validate research findings.

RESULTS

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation conducted at Al-Fattahiyyah Islamic Boarding School in Boyolangu, Tulungagung, this study found that the acculturation process of new students (santri) takes place gradually and is influenced by various internal and external factors. The data were collected from boarding school caregivers, female dormitory administrators, senior santri, and new santri to better understand how newcomers adapt to the culture and daily life of the pesantren environment.

Al-Fattahiyyah Islamic Boarding School is a religious educational institution established in 2010 with the aim of developing students with strong moral values, intellectual competence, and religious understanding that can be applied in everyday life. Based on the findings, the vision and mission of the pesantren serve as the foundation for student development and character formation. As explained by one of the caregivers, *"Education and teaching here are in accordance with the vision and mission of the Islamic boarding school, namely to produce students with noble character, develop discipline, and continue the religious mission of Islamic scholars"* (Interview with Boarding School Caregiver/Representative, Mr. Sutari, April 28, 2026).



Figure 1. Interview with the Caregiver of the Islamic Boarding School

Figure 1. Interview with the Caregiver of the Islamic Boarding School shows that the educational system at Al-Fattahiyyah is strongly oriented toward religious values, discipline, and the development of personal responsibility. The findings indicate that the acculturation process begins with an introduction to the boarding school environment and

institutional regulations. During this initial stage, new santri often experience significant changes in lifestyle compared to their previous lives at home. Many students encounter confusion and difficulties in adjusting to new routines and expectations. As stated by the caregiver, *"In general, new students who come to the boarding school experience difficulties or confusion because they are still being introduced to the activities and rules of the pesantren"* (Interview with Boarding School Caregiver/Representative, Mr. Sutari, April 28, 2026). Observational findings also revealed that many new students initially struggled to follow strict schedules, wake up early, and adjust to the structured lifestyle of the boarding school.



Figure 2. Interview with SeniorSantri

Figure 2. Interview with Senior Santri Shows the second stage involves social interaction with senior santri and boarding school administrators. The study found that social relationships play a crucial role in helping new students adapt to pesantren culture. Senior santri often function as informal mentors who guide newcomers regarding daily schedules, institutional rules, and acceptable behavior within the dormitory environment. One new santri explained, *"If I do not know what activity will be carried out, I ask the senior students"* (Interview with New Santri, May 3, 2026). Observation results further showed that senior students actively supported new santri through everyday interactions, helping reduce feelings of fear, awkwardness, and uncertainty during the adjustment process.



Figure 3. Interview with New Santri

Figure 3. Interview with New Santri Shows the next stage is adjustment to pesantren values and daily practices. At this stage, students begin to participate more consistently in religious and communal activities, including congregational prayers, religious learning sessions, cleaning duties, and disciplined daily routines. Initially, some students found it difficult to follow all activities consistently; however, regular practice gradually helped them adapt. This process is reflected in the statement of one participant who said, *"At first, I found it difficult to follow all boarding school activities, but gradually I became used to them because everyone else was doing the same"* (Interview with New Santri, May 3, 2026). Boarding school administrators also emphasized that adaptation varies depending on each student's personal background and individual characteristics, meaning that some students require more guidance and emotional support than others.

At a more advanced stage, students begin to accept and internalize pesantren values in their everyday lives. At this point, rules are no longer followed merely because of supervision or obligation, but because students begin to understand and personally accept the meaning behind them. According to the caregiver, *"Students who have become accustomed to boarding school life usually carry out activities independently without constant reminders, and they tend to feel comfortable staying at the pesantren"* (Interview with Boarding School Caregiver/Representative, Mr. Sutari, April 28, 2026). Observational findings showed that students who had reached this stage became more disciplined, socially engaged, and capable of managing their responsibilities independently.



Figure 4. Interview with Boarding School Administrator

Figure 4. Interview with Boarding School Administrator Shows in addition to the stages of acculturation, this study identified several factors influencing the success of the adaptation process. Age emerged as one important factor, as older students tended to demonstrate greater emotional maturity and independence compared to younger students. A boarding school administrator explained that *"Younger students usually find it harder to adapt because they still depend on their parents and are not yet accustomed to independent living, unlike older students"* (Interview with Boarding School Administrator, April 30, 2026). Observations showed that younger santri were more likely to experience homesickness, emotional distress, and difficulty organizing their daily routines.

Personality was also found to affect adaptation. Students with open, communicative, and sociable personalities adapted more easily to the pesantren environment than those who were quiet or withdrawn. A senior santri explained, *"Students who are friendly and easily socialize with others adapt more easily to boarding school life, while quieter students usually need more time to feel comfortable"* (Interview with Senior Santri, April 30, 2026). This finding indicates that social interaction and communication skills contribute significantly to successful cultural adjustment.

Motivation and attitude were equally influential. Students who entered the boarding school with strong personal motivation to study religion and improve themselves tended to adapt more successfully than those who joined primarily due to parental pressure. One participant explained, *"At first, I found it difficult to stay at the boarding school because I was not used to being away from home and my parents, but over time I started to understand my purpose for studying here and reorganized my intentions"* (Interview with New Santri, April 28, 2026). This suggests

that internal motivation strengthens students' emotional resilience during the adaptation process.

Cultural background also shaped students' experiences of adjustment. Differences in language, communication styles, and everyday habits occasionally created challenges, particularly for students coming from different regions. One student admitted, *"At first, I had difficulty understanding the language used by my friends because it was different from the language spoken in my hometown"* (Interview with New Santri, May 3, 2026). However, continued interaction gradually helped students adapt to linguistic and cultural differences.

Finally, social environment, length of stay, institutional structure, and previous experience also contributed to successful acculturation. Positive relationships with caregivers, senior students, and administrators created a supportive environment that helped students feel accepted and emotionally secure. Likewise, structured schedules and clear regulations facilitated adjustment to pesantren life. As emphasized by the caregiver, *"The rules and activities of the boarding school are designed to help students become disciplined and responsible in accordance with the vision and mission of the pesantren"* (Interview with Boarding School Caregiver/Representative, Mr. Sutari, April 28, 2026). Overall, the findings suggest that the acculturation of new santri at Al-Fattahiyyah Islamic Boarding School is a gradual and dynamic process shaped by personal readiness, institutional support, social relationships, and prior experiences, enabling students to eventually accept and internalize pesantren values in their daily lives.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the acculturation process of new students (santri) at Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah, Boyolangu, Tulungagung, occurs through a gradual, dynamic, and socially mediated process in which individuals negotiate between their original cultural background and the religious boarding school culture. Rather than representing a simple process of obedience to institutional rules, acculturation in this context reflects a transformation of attitudes, behavioral orientations, emotional adjustment, and social interaction patterns that develop through everyday experiences in pesantren life. The process involves adaptation to religious discipline, communal norms, moral expectations, and structured routines embedded within the pesantren environment. These findings indicate that acculturation among new santri extends beyond surface-level

adaptation and eventually contributes to the formation of personal identity and internalized religious discipline. From a theoretical perspective, the findings align with the conception of acculturation proposed by Koentjaraningrat, which emphasizes that acculturation occurs when different cultural systems encounter one another and gradually influence behavioral practices without completely eliminating the original cultural identity (Elisabeth Ayuna, 2023). In the context of Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah, new santri enter the institution carrying distinct social habits, linguistic backgrounds, family values, and prior life experiences. Upon entering the pesantren environment, they encounter a new social order characterized by discipline, simplicity, obedience, religious devotion, and collective living. Consequently, the transition experienced by santri should not be interpreted merely as institutional adjustment, but rather as a broader cultural negotiation involving psychological adaptation and value transformation.

The findings reveal that the acculturation process among new santri occurs through several interconnected stages consisting of environmental introduction, social interaction, behavioral adjustment, acceptance, and value internalization. This progression confirms previous arguments suggesting that acculturation in Islamic boarding school settings develops gradually and cannot be achieved instantly because adaptation requires repeated interaction with institutional norms and cultural expectations (Imam Bukhori & Yaqub Cikusin, 2023). At the earliest stage, new santri encounter what may be described as an introductory cultural phase in which they begin to familiarize themselves with institutional rules, schedules, religious obligations, and social expectations established within the pesantren. Empirical findings suggest that this initial phase is frequently accompanied by confusion, uncertainty, and emotional discomfort. New santri commonly experience difficulties adapting to unfamiliar routines such as waking up before dawn, participating in collective worship, complying with strict disciplinary systems, limiting personal freedom, and adjusting to communal living arrangements. Several santri also reported emotional challenges associated with separation from parents and the loss of household comfort. Such experiences indicate the presence of culture shock, understood as a psychological response resulting from discrepancies between prior habits and newly encountered cultural expectations. In acculturation theory, culture shock represents a natural phase of transition in which individuals experience temporary disorientation before developing familiarity with the new social environment (Cormos, 2022). Therefore, confusion among new santri

should not be interpreted as resistance or institutional failure, but rather as an expected and transitional stage in cultural adaptation.

At this stage, the role of pesantren social agents becomes highly significant. The findings demonstrate that senior santri, administrators, and caregivers function not only as authority figures but also as mediators who facilitate adaptation by providing emotional support, practical guidance, and behavioral examples. New santri often depend on senior students to understand daily schedules, social etiquette, institutional expectations, and acceptable behavioral norms. Informal interaction appears to be particularly influential because adaptation occurs not exclusively through formal instruction but through social imitation and repeated interpersonal communication. These findings reinforce the argument that acculturation is strongly influenced by social learning mechanisms and cultural transmission through everyday interaction (Raku, 2022). The adjustment stage becomes increasingly evident as new santri begin to adopt pesantren routines and behavioral norms in a more consistent manner. The findings reveal that adaptation occurs gradually through repeated practice and institutional habituation. New santri progressively become accustomed to congregational prayers, religious study activities, structured schedules, modest lifestyles, and respectful communication patterns. Importantly, adaptation does not emerge through coercion alone but develops through repetitive engagement with institutional culture. Habituation serves as a critical mechanism in transforming external obligations into accepted routines, allowing individuals to transition from compliance to personal understanding.

This process reflects the broader theoretical understanding that acculturation involves behavioral adaptation as individuals gradually integrate elements of a new culture into their daily lives (Bornstein et al., 2025). Within Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah, new santri begin to reconstruct everyday practices according to pesantren values while selectively preserving positive aspects of their previous identity. Consequently, behavioral transformation emerges not as a complete replacement of prior identity but rather as a process of adjustment and enrichment. The study also indicates that acceptance constitutes a significant turning point within the acculturation process. Initially, some santri perceived pesantren regulations as burdensome, particularly due to demanding schedules and restrictions on personal autonomy. However, over time, repeated interaction with institutional norms and supportive social relationships encouraged gradual acceptance of pesantren values. New santri increasingly demonstrated discipline, emotional stability,

social confidence, and commitment to religious practices. More importantly, the motivation behind behavioral compliance shifted from external obligation toward personal willingness and internal understanding. This finding is important because it suggests that successful acculturation in pesantren environments cannot be measured solely through visible conformity to rules. Compliance achieved through pressure remains temporary and vulnerable to resistance, whereas behavioral acceptance grounded in personal understanding is more sustainable. In this regard, internal motivation plays a decisive role in strengthening adaptation outcomes. Santri who understand the moral and spiritual objectives of pesantren life appear more capable of enduring discomfort and adjusting to institutional expectations than those who initially perceive pesantren enrollment merely as parental obligation.

In relation to the theory of socialization, the findings indicate that the acculturation process of new santri can simultaneously be understood as a form of secondary socialization, in which individuals learn new norms, values, and expected social behaviors outside the family environment (Lahamit, 2021). Kyai, pesantren caregivers, senior students, and administrators function as socialization agents responsible for transmitting institutional culture through instruction, supervision, role modeling, and everyday interaction. Socialization occurs not only through direct explanation but also through behavioral exemplification, repeated practice, and communal participation in daily religious activities. Through this mechanism, pesantren culture becomes normalized and increasingly integrated into the lived experiences of new santri. Furthermore, the findings strengthen the argument that pesantren culture itself serves as a structured social environment that facilitates cultural adaptation. The pesantren system is characterized by religious discipline, communal living, moral supervision, and strong interpersonal bonds between students and authority figures (Kamal, 2018). These structural characteristics create an immersive environment where behavioral repetition reinforces moral learning and collective identity formation. As a result, acculturation becomes deeply embedded in everyday routines rather than functioning as a separate or temporary adjustment process.

A deeper stage of acculturation identified in this study is value internalization, in which pesantren norms are no longer practiced merely as external obligations but become integrated into the personal awareness and moral orientation of santri. Findings demonstrate that santri who successfully progress through this stage begin to display discipline, modesty, responsibility, and emotional independence without continuous

supervision or external reminders. Participation in congregational worship, adherence to schedules, respectful communication, and commitment to communal responsibilities increasingly emerge as voluntary behavior rather than institutional compliance. This transformation indicates that acculturation has shifted from behavioral adaptation toward internal psychological acceptance. The findings support the argument proposed by Imam Bukhori and Yaqub Cikusin (2023), who explain that adaptation within pesantren culture develops into internalization when students begin to understand the meaning behind institutional practices rather than simply obeying regulations. Internalization therefore becomes a marker of successful acculturation because pesantren values are absorbed into personal identity formation. Within Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah, this process reflects a transition in which institutional culture ceases to be perceived as an external force and instead becomes embedded within everyday consciousness. Consequently, new santri gradually reconstruct their sense of self according to pesantren values while maintaining constructive aspects of their prior identity.

The study further demonstrates that acculturation among new santri can be understood through several cultural forms, particularly addition, syncretism, and temporary rejection. The most dominant form observed is addition, in which new cultural elements are incorporated into pre-existing behavioral systems without completely eliminating previous cultural habits. New santri continue to preserve positive values acquired from family and regional environments while simultaneously adopting pesantren practices such as congregational prayer, discipline, modest behavior, structured religious learning, and collective responsibility. Such findings support previous interpretations suggesting that acculturation often manifests through the enrichment of prior cultural patterns rather than complete replacement (Fadhila et al., 2023). In addition to addition, syncretic tendencies are also visible throughout the adaptation process. Syncretism occurs when new santri selectively combine prior moral habits with pesantren expectations, thereby producing hybrid behavioral forms compatible with institutional norms. Santri from different social and cultural backgrounds retain positive cultural values inherited from their communities, including politeness, family ethics, and religious customs, while adapting them to pesantren discipline and collective living practices. This process confirms that pesantren culture does not necessarily suppress diversity but instead provides a social framework within which cultural differences may be negotiated and harmonized. At the same time, temporary rejection occasionally emerges during early adaptation. Some santri initially experience

resistance toward institutional demands, particularly when confronted with strict schedules, homesickness, communal discipline, or limitations on personal freedom. However, the findings suggest that rejection is generally temporary and gradually diminishes through interpersonal support, repeated exposure, and emotional adjustment. This observation expands previous arguments regarding adaptation among new santri, which emphasize that early discomfort should be interpreted as part of normal adjustment rather than evidence of incompatibility with pesantren life (Hestyaningsih et al., 2024). Therefore, emotional resistance appears to function as a transitional phase preceding adaptation rather than a permanent obstacle.

The findings also demonstrate that Berry's acculturation framework provides an important lens for understanding adaptation strategies among new santri. Four acculturation orientations—assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration—can theoretically emerge during cultural contact (Marhayati & Suryanto, 2017). However, the present study reveals that integration constitutes the most dominant and institutionally desirable strategy among santri at Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah. Through integration, santri retain constructive aspects of their original identity while simultaneously participating actively in pesantren culture. This strategy enables them to negotiate cultural continuity without experiencing alienation from either their previous background or institutional environment. The predominance of integration is significant because it illustrates that pesantren education seeks cultural alignment rather than cultural erasure. Instead of demanding the abandonment of personal identity, pesantren values are integrated into pre-existing cultural frameworks through adaptation, repetition, and moral learning. Santri who successfully adopt integration strategies demonstrate higher emotional stability, stronger interpersonal relationships, and greater resilience in responding to institutional demands. These findings reinforce Berry's proposition that integration is associated with healthier psychological adaptation and stronger well-being outcomes because individuals remain connected to both their original and newly encountered cultural environments (Marhayati & Suryanto, 2017).

Beyond cultural strategies, the study reveals that acculturation outcomes are shaped by multiple interconnected internal and external factors. Age emerges as an important determinant because maturity influences emotional stability, independence, and adaptability. Older santri generally appear more capable of managing institutional expectations, regulating emotions, and understanding pesantren routines, whereas younger

santri tend to require longer adjustment periods and greater emotional support. This finding corresponds with temporal perspectives on acculturation, which emphasize developmental maturity as a variable influencing adaptation outcomes (Titzmann & Lee, 2022). Personality also significantly shapes adaptation experiences. Open, communicative, and socially active santri tend to adapt more quickly because they are more willing to seek guidance, establish relationships, and participate in collective activities. Conversely, introverted or socially reserved santri often require more time to build confidence and familiarity within the pesantren environment. Such findings support Amburg's (2022) argument that flexibility and openness toward social interaction facilitate smoother cultural adaptation processes.

Motivation and attitude further emerge as decisive internal variables. Santri who possess intrinsic motivation to pursue religious learning generally demonstrate greater persistence and resilience in navigating adaptation challenges. Their willingness to endure discomfort stems from a meaningful understanding of educational and spiritual objectives. In contrast, santri whose attendance is motivated primarily by parental pressure often encounter stronger emotional resistance and lower engagement levels during early adaptation. These findings suggest that motivation serves as an important psychological resource that mediates institutional adjustment and long-term commitment. External conditions are equally influential. Cultural background shapes communication patterns, social expectations, and familiarity with pesantren values. Santri from religiously oriented families often experience smoother adaptation because institutional expectations overlap with prior experiences. Conversely, larger cultural distance may create communication barriers, unfamiliarity, and temporary confusion, particularly among students from different linguistic or regional backgrounds. Nevertheless, findings indicate that repeated interaction and social support gradually reduce such barriers and foster intercultural understanding.

Social environment appears to be one of the strongest facilitating factors in successful acculturation. Supportive relationships with senior students, administrators, and peers significantly reduce homesickness, uncertainty, and emotional distress. Positive interaction promotes belongingness and emotional security, thereby accelerating adaptation. In contrast, limited social acceptance may prolong discomfort and delay adjustment. These findings suggest that acculturation in pesantren settings is fundamentally relational and dependent upon the quality of everyday social interaction. The study also identifies several implications arising from these findings. Theoretically, this research

contributes to the broader understanding of acculturation by contextualizing classical acculturation frameworks within Islamic boarding school environments. Existing acculturation theories are frequently applied to migration, intercultural contact, or ethnic adaptation settings; however, this study demonstrates that similar mechanisms also operate within religious educational institutions characterized by structured moral systems and communal discipline. Methodologically, the findings highlight the importance of qualitative approaches in capturing emotional transitions, behavioral negotiations, and meaning-making processes embedded within acculturation experiences. Practically, the findings imply that pesantren institutions should strengthen orientation programs for new santri by combining disciplinary introduction with emotional and psychological support. Senior santri may function more effectively as mentors and facilitators rather than solely disciplinary supervisors, particularly during periods of culture shock and emotional vulnerability. Institutional efforts to maintain social warmth, empathy, and clear communication may further reduce adjustment difficulties and support healthier adaptation trajectories.

Nevertheless, this study also contains several limitations. First, the research context is limited to a single pesantren, thereby restricting broader generalization across diverse pesantren models and regional settings. Second, the qualitative nature of the study prioritizes subjective interpretation and lived experiences, which may vary according to researcher positioning and participant openness. Third, the focus on newly enrolled santri limits longitudinal understanding of how acculturation evolves over extended periods of pesantren life. Future studies may therefore adopt comparative or longitudinal designs to explore the sustainability of value internalization and emotional attachment among santri across different educational stages. Overall, this study confirms that the acculturation of new santri at Pondok Pesantren Al-Fattahiyyah is not a passive process of adaptation but rather an active negotiation between identity, culture, discipline, and spirituality. Through social interaction, habituation, and value internalization, santri gradually transform institutional norms into meaningful components of personal identity while simultaneously preserving constructive aspects of their cultural origins. In this sense, pesantren functions not only as an educational institution but also as a social and cultural environment that shapes character, moral consciousness, and adaptive resilience among its students.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the acculturation process of new students at Al-Fattahiyyah Islamic Boarding School, Boyolangu, Tulungagung occurs gradually, dynamically, and continuously through several interconnected stages, including environmental introduction, social interaction, adjustment to institutional values and habits, and the eventual acceptance and internalization of pesantren culture. The findings indicate that acculturation extends beyond formal compliance with institutional regulations and represents a broader socio-cultural transformation in which students gradually integrate discipline, religiosity, simplicity, and independence into their daily practices while maintaining elements of their original cultural identity. Accordingly, the study successfully addresses its objectives by explaining both the process of student acculturation and the factors shaping its development within the pesantren environment.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that successful acculturation is influenced by interconnected internal and external factors, including age, personality, motivation and attitudes, cultural background, social environment, length of stay, institutional systems and structures, and previous experiences. A supportive social environment, structured institutional practices, and the active involvement of senior students and administrators significantly facilitate the adjustment process among new students. Theoretically, this study contributes to the fields of educational sociology and cultural anthropology by strengthening the understanding of acculturation and socialization within Islamic boarding school education while emphasizing cultural integration as the dominant adaptation strategy. Practically, the findings provide an important foundation for developing orientation programs, mentoring systems, and early-stage student guidance to support more effective and humane adaptation processes. Future research is recommended to adopt longitudinal or comparative approaches across different types of Islamic boarding schools to generate broader insights into the dynamics of student acculturation and more adaptive educational strategies in culturally diverse settings.

REFERENCES

Addina, N., Nikmah, W. Z., Kinasih, T. E., Puspita, S. D., Fitriyah, U., Fitri, S. K., Ardiansyah, Z., Atikah, S. N., & Purnomo, S. (2025). *Pondok pesantren: Tradisi Kitab Kuning, Akulturasi Budaya, dan Kurikulum* (1st ed.). Wawasan Ilmu.

Arifin, M. Z. (2022). The traditionalism of the Islamic boarding school education system in the era of modernization. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme, 4*(1), 286–396. https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v4i1.1367

Bornstein, M. H., Bernhard, J. K., Bradley, R. H., Chen, X., Farver, J. A. M., Gold, S. J., Hernandez, D. J., Spiel, C., van de Vijver, F. J. R., & Yoshikawa, H. (2019). Psychological acculturation: Perspectives, principles, processes, and prospects. In S. J. Gold & S. J. Nawyn (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of migration studies* (2nd ed., pp. 19–31). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315458298-3

Cormoş, V. C. (2022). The processes of adaptation, assimilation and integration in the country of migration: A psychosocial perspective on place identity changes. *Sustainability, 14*(16), Article 10296. https://doi.org/10.3390/su141610296

Fadhila, M. E. N., Samawi, A., & Astuti, W. (2023). Akulturasi Budaya Asuh Orang Tua Lokal dan Pendatang. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 7*(6), 7545–7556. https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i6.4595

Fil Amri, F., Gamasari, R., & Amin, I. (2024). Maojok: Akulturasi Ilmu Gramatika Arab di Minangkabau: Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Nurul Yaqin, Ringan-Ringan. *Al Ma'any: Jurnal Studi Bahasa dan Sastra, 3*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.56874/almaany.v3i1.1863

Fitriani, R. A., Murdowo, D., & Liritantri, W. (2023). Applying the psychological of space in Islamic boarding school: Case study: Pesantren Al Mahshyar Nurul Iman. *Journal of Islamic Architecture, 7*(3), 437–444. https://doi.org/10.18860/jia.v7i3.17436

Hailal, F. (2022). Joglo dan spiritualisme dalam pesantren: Potret akulturasi budaya di Pondok Pesantren LSQ Ar-Rahmah. *Esoterik Annual International Conference, 1*(1), 77–96.

Hefner, C.-M. (2022). Morality, religious authority, and the digital edge: Indonesian Muslim schoolgirls online. *American Ethnologist, 49*(3), 359–373. https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.13088

Hestyaningsih, L., Roswanto, B., Namina, A. V., & Athiyallah, A. (2024). Adaptasi Kehidupan Santri Baru di Pondok Pesantren (Literarur Review). *Madaniyah, 14*(1), 131–148. https://doi.org/10.58410/madaniyah.v14i1.834

Imam Bukhori, & Yaqub Cikusin. (2023). Adaptasi Santri dalam Budaya Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Journal Education Multicultural of Islamic Society, 3*(1), 19–41.

Indonesia. (2019). *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 18 Tahun 2019 tentang Pesantren*. https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/122743/uu-no-18-tahun-2019

Kamal, F. (2018). Transformasi Pendidikan Pesantren sebagai Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Abad 21. *Paramurobi: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, 1*(2), 17–30. https://doi.org/10.32699/paramurobi.v1i2.524

Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. (2023). *Statistik pendidikan pesantren tahun 2023*. Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam.

Lahamit, S. (2021). Sosialisasi Peraturan Daerah dalam Rangka Optimalisasi Fungsi Legislasi Anggota DPRD Provinsi Riau: Studi Pelaksanaan Sosialisasi Peraturan Daerah di Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *PUBLIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Publik, 7*(1), 32–45. https://doi.org/10.25299/jiap.2021.vol7(1).6766

Marhayati, N., & Suryanto, S. (2017). Strategi akulturasi masyarakat Tabut di Bengkulu. *Studia Islamika, 24*(3), 403–433. https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v24i3.4319

Maskur, M. (2020). Internalisasi Nilai Budaya pada Pembelajaran Santri di Pondok Pesantren Tradisional. *Journal of Education and Instruction (JOEAI), 3*(2), 123–129. https://doi.org/10.31539/joeai.v3i2.1387

Muhidin, N., Aminudin, A., & Rahmah, A. Q. N. (2025). Peranan Pondok Pesantren dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional. *JIEP: Journal of Islamic Education Papua, 2*(2), 82–94. https://doi.org/10.53491/jiep.v2i2.1248

Mulyani, S. R., Sari, S. Y., & Nadilla, N. (2022). Kebiasaan Bernegosiasi, Saling Percaya dan Saling Memotivasi untuk Menciptakan Suasana Aman dan Damai Antar Santri di Rahmatan Lil'alamin International Islamic Boarding School. *Community Development Journal: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat, 3*(2), 1042–1046. https://doi.org/10.31004/cdj.v3i2.5318

Muttaqin, A., Roibin, R., Barizi, A., Jamilah, J., & Asy'arie, B. F. (2024). Examining the model for forming religious character education through santri behavior traditions in Islamic boarding schools. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan, 16*(4), 5369–5386. https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i4.6181

Nuroniyah, W. (2023). Gender discourses within pesantren in Cirebon: Understanding the typologies of kyais' interpretations of the concept of qawwām. *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam, 7*(2), 875–896. https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i2.15689

Nurul Qomariyah, & Mohammad Darwis. (2023). Peran pondok pesantren salaf di era Society 5.0. *Risalatuna: Journal of Pesantren Studies, 3*(2), 220–234. https://doi.org/10.54471/rjps.v3i2.2528

Salsabila, D., Firmansyah, F., Aisyah, P., Hawiwk, S., Bela, S., & Mu'alimin, M. (2024). Strategi Manajemen Konflik dalam Proses Adaptasi Santri Baru di Pondok Pesantren Ra'iyatul Husnan Wringin Bondowoso. *Jurnal Budi Pekerti Agama Islam, 3*(1), 243–253. https://doi.org/10.61132/jbpai.v3i1.893

Setyawan, B. W., & Fahrian, D. K. (2022). Akulturasi Budaya Islam, Jawa, dan Tionghoa di Pesarean Gunung Kawi Kabupaten Malang. *Sumbula: Jurnal Studi Keagamaan, Sosial dan Budaya, 7*(1), 180–188. https://doi.org/10.32492/sumbula.v7i1.4878

Sodikin, O., Barlian, U. C., Sauri, S., & Nurulhaq, D. (2020). Management of character education based on Panca Jiwa in Pondok Pesantren Darul Muttaqien Bogor. *International Journal of Nusantara Islam, 8*(2), 172–180. https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v8i2.10776

Titzmann, P. F., & Lee, R. M. (2022). New temporal concepts of acculturation in immigrant youth. *Child Development Perspectives, 16*(3), 165–172. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12458

Van Amburg, G. (2022). *Acculturation* [Preprint]. OSF. https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/d9qjr

Yahya, I., & Sahidin, S. (2022). Relation of religion and practical politics: Contextual adoption of constitutional Islamic jurisprudence for Muslim clerics in Indonesia. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies, 78*(1), Article a7405. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i1.7405