

Ethnopedagogy of Tindih, Maliq, and Merang in Character Education: A Comparative Multi-Site Case Synthesis of Nahdlatul Wathan and Nahdlatul Ulama Pesantren in Lombok

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Abstract: Sasak Muslims in Lombok describe proper conduct with three vernacular values: tindih, a consistency between word and deed that is tied to faith; maliq, restraint from what is improper; and merang, glossed as shame, solidarity or diligence depending on the source. Educators now propose these values as a resource for character education. It is much less clear whether they reach the two traditionalist organisations that run most pesantren on the island, Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). This article reports a comparative multi-site case synthesis, not a field study. We located 41 peer-reviewed studies on Lombok through structured searches of journal and publisher pages and coded each by organisational setting, site type, pedagogical mechanism and three evidence layers: whether the vernacular triad is named (V), whether character formation is discussed in an institutional idiom (I), and whether a teaching practice is described (P). Analysis followed critical interpretive synthesis with a framework-matrix display. Six studies name the triad, and none of them concerns an NW or NU pesantren. NW is documented through exemplary modelling, teacher traits, communal hiziban and curriculum integration, with I in 5 of 16 studies and P in 4 of 16. NU in Lombok rests on two studies, one on pesantren history and one on preaching, plus a comparison of how tuan guru of both organisations handled pandemic rules. We argue that ethnopedagogy in this setting is better described as a set of mechanisms carried by institutional idioms than as the transfer of named values, and we offer a translation map and a matched-pair field protocol to test that claim. The findings are limited by abstract-level coding, uneven coverage and the absence of primary data.

Keywords: *Ethnopedagogy; Character Education; Sasak local wisdom; Nahdlatul Wathan; Nahdlatul Ulama; Pesantren; Lombok; Comparative Case Synthesis*

Introduction

A santri who enters a pesantren in Lombok learns more than the content of the kitab. She learns which form of the Sasak language to use with the tuan guru, when a

question is better left unasked, how to behave at a feast, and what her neighbours will think if she does not. Educators in Indonesia increasingly call this kind of learning ethnopedagogy, a pedagogy that draws on the moral vocabulary and practices of a community (Rohyadi et al., 2024; Sugara & Sugito, 2022). Pesantren fit the idea well, since they are residential, kinship-linked institutions whose teaching has always depended on the example of the teacher (Dhofier, 1999). A recent systematic review even proposes pesantren together with local wisdom as an ethnopedagogical model (Anggraeni et al., 2026), and Indonesian law since 2019 gives pesantren a formal statutory place in the national education system (Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

The concept is less settled than its popularity suggests. Sugara and Sugito (2022) reviewed a decade of work and concluded that ethnopedagogy still lacks a clear conceptual framework, with teacher competence as a main obstacle. Practice-oriented studies use “ethnopedagogy” and “local-wisdom integration” almost interchangeably, and they report mostly positive results (Rohyadi et al., 2024; Uswatun et al., 2026). The culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogy tradition, by contrast, has long insisted that culture is plural, dynamic and entangled with power (Paris & Alim, 2014; Sleeter, 2012). A study of ethnopedagogy in a setting where Muslims disagree about what counts as legitimate custom should therefore ask not only whether local values are taught but whose version is taught and through what mechanism.

Lombok is such a setting. The Sasak, the island’s majority population, use a small set of vernacular values to describe a well-ordered life. The most cited are *tindih*, *maliq* and *merang*. Tohri et al. (2022) present them as operating philosophies for character education in East Lombok primary schools, and later studies repeat the formulation in community, literary and civic-education contexts (Alditia et al., 2025; Sudarwo et al., 2023). Meanwhile Islamic education on the island is organised mainly by two Aswaja-oriented organisations that Fahrurrozi (2018) describes as separate bodies, Nahdlatul Wathan, based in East Lombok, and Nahdlatul Ulama, the national organisation based in Java. Most *tuan guru* affiliate with one or the other. Pardi et al. (2024) place both among the managers of traditional pondok pesantren, in contrast to modernist and Salafi-Wahhabi integrated schools, and the Salafi challenge to *tuan guru*

authority and to customary ritual is documented in several studies (Fitriani, 2015; Saparudin, 2022; Said, 2019).

Put these literatures side by side and a gap appears. The studies that name *tindih*, *maliq* and *merang* describe public schools, a village community, a novel and a theatre tradition. The studies of NW and NU *pesantren* describe *tuan guru* authority, institutional history, ritual and curriculum, but they use a different vocabulary: *uswah* (exemplary conduct), *akhlak*, *Aswaja* and moderation. No study that we found joins the two, and the NU side of the comparison is thin. The title of this article promises a comparative multi-site study of NW and NU *pesantren*. We have to be plain about what that can mean. No fieldwork was carried out for this paper. The “sites” are the institutional settings that published studies describe, and the comparison is a synthesis of those accounts. We think this is still worth doing, because it shows where the evidence is, where it is missing and what a real multi-site study would need to measure. Three questions guide the synthesis.

1. **RQ1.** Where in the Lombok literature are *tindih*, *maliq* and *merang* named, and in which institutional settings?
2. **RQ2.** Which pedagogical mechanisms do the NW and NU literatures document, and at which evidence layers (V, I, P)?
3. **RQ3.** Which correspondences between the triad and each organisation’s idiom can be defended from the published evidence, and which remain untested?

The article makes three contributions. It introduces a simple three-layer coding of evidence (V, I, P) that makes the distance between vernacular values and institutional practice visible. It offers a translation map that states, as hypotheses, how each value might travel through each pedagogical mechanism in each organisation. And it proposes a matched-pair field protocol that would turn the hypotheses into tests. The paper does not claim to describe what happens inside any particular *pesantren*.

Conceptual Background

Ethnopedagogy and its Critics

The idea that teaching works better when it connects with students’ cultural resources has a long Anglophone lineage. Ladson-Billings (1995) built a theory of

culturally relevant pedagogy from the practice of exemplary teachers of African American students. Gay (2002) argued that cultural discontinuity between home and school depresses achievement and that teachers need specific knowledge of their students' backgrounds. Moll et al. (1992) showed how teachers who visited households as learners could treat community knowledge as a resource for classroom work. Paris (2012) later asked whether "relevant" and "responsive" go far enough, and proposed culturally sustaining pedagogy that fosters linguistic and cultural pluralism rather than merely using it as a bridge.

Two features of this tradition matter here. The first is its attention to how learning happens, not only to what is taught. Rogoff et al. (2003) describe learning through intent participation, in which children observe and take part in shared community work, and they contrast it with transmission through lessons. Biermann and Townsend-Cross (2008) argue that Indigenous pedagogy deserves theorising as a system that transfers skills while conveying meaning, values and identity. Both support the view that a moral vocabulary is learned through modelling, participation and speech, which is exactly what pesantren life offers.

The second feature is a set of internal critiques. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) warn against reading cultural difference as a fixed trait of a group, and propose "repertoires of practice" built through histories of engagement. Zipin (2009) criticises teachers who take up only the comfortable parts of community knowledge and ignore the difficult parts. Paris and Alim (2014) point out that youth cultures change and can both challenge and reproduce inequality. Sleeter (2012) shows that culturally responsive pedagogy is marginalised by standardised curricula and by those who protect existing power. For Islamic education, Akhter (2026) proposes a framework for ethical deliberation that takes persistent disagreement among Muslims as its starting point. Taken together, these critiques tell us what to look for: essentialising claims about "Sasak culture", selective use of comfortable values, and silence about who decides.

The Indonesian literature is more affirmative. Rohyadi et al. (2024) report that an ethnopedagogical approach in a primary school in Serang formed religious, nationalist, cooperative and independent character. Uswatun et al. (2026) describe

cultural events, batik making and drumming at a West Lombok primary school, and they note gendered preferences among pupils without treating them as a problem. Rahman et al. (2026) found that eight lecturers at one Islamic university used ethnopedagogical principles in practice but that only three built local wisdom into curriculum planning, so implementation depended on individual initiative. Maulana (2022) found that character education in Indonesian senior high schools was largely unplanned and unevaluated. Put plainly, ethnopedagogy is an attractive label for practice whose mechanisms and limits are not yet well specified. Our working definition follows from this. We use ethnopedagogy to mean the processes through which a community's moral vocabulary is transmitted by modelling, participation, speech and ritual, inside institutions that also select, reinterpret and sometimes contest that vocabulary. The definition is ours, built from Rogoff et al. (2003) and the critiques above. No source we read offers it.

A Muslim setting adds a further complication that the Anglophone literature rarely addresses: the line between "religion" and "culture" is itself disputed. Asad (1986) proposed that Islam be approached as a discursive tradition, in which practices are judged against a tradition of argument and not against a fixed list of essentials. Ammerman (2020) makes a parallel case for a practice approach to religion, and Fadil and Fernando (2015) argue for attention to the everyday Muslim, whose conduct is neither strictly doctrinal nor merely customary. Lamont and Molnár (2002) and Wimmer (2008) supply the corresponding idea from boundary theory: groups draw lines between acceptable and unacceptable practice, and those lines are made and unmade in social action. Read together, these works suggest that when a pesantren teaches a Sasak value it also takes a position on where the line between Islam and custom runs.

Character education supplies the other half of the title. Berkowitz and Bier (2004) reviewed the effectiveness literature and found it inconsistent over decades, which is a reminder that claims of character formation need careful evidence. In pesantren the relevant mechanisms are often described as a hidden curriculum. Homsiyah et al. (2026) review sixteen studies and identify four pillars of this curriculum: exemplary leadership, organisational culture, dormitory environment and

digital integration. Aji et al. (2026) describe how moderate values are internalised in a madrasah through modelling, norms, communal prayer and peer relations. Neither uses the label ethnopedagogy, but their mechanisms are the ones that an ethnopedagogical account would need.

Tindih, Maliq and Merang

The triad is documented in a small and interconnected set of articles. Tohri et al. (2022), the most detailed, report that East Lombok primary schools lacked an appropriate model of local-wisdom character education although Sasak culture holds values that could be integrated across intra-, co- and extra-curricular activity. They define tindih as being honest and consistent so that words match deeds, maliq as abstaining from what is unbecoming or unethical in a way tied to nobility and civility, and merang as innovation in work. Murahim et al. (2022), reading a novel, define tindih as commitment to truth and nobility sourced from faith, maliq as refraining from improper acts, and merang as social solidarity and care for others. Sudarwo et al. (2023) treat tindih as the primary value in a village community and link it to obedience, respect and proper conduct in religious and customary settings. Alditia et al. (2025) map the triad onto Pancasila: tindih to the relation between humans and God, maliq to relations among humans, and merang to the individual's role in society. Marijo (2019) lists the three among ten Sasak personal values in a theatre tradition. Karomi et al. (2026) discuss tindih, maliq-merang and sangkep (deliberation) in the school culture of East Lombok secondary schools.

Three observations follow. First, the definitions are not stable. Merang means work innovation in one source and social solidarity in others, and the studies do not resolve the difference. Second, tindih is repeatedly tied to faith, which suggests a religion-infused reading. Aziz (2009) supports this in general terms by describing Sasak Islam as a combination of tradition, culture and religious values in continuing dialectic. None of the sources we read argues for a pre-Islamic origin or gives an etymology, so we make no claim about origin. Third, the triad appears to be a codified teaching framework circulating among a connected group of authors rather than an object of independent ethnography. Parhanuddin, for example, co-authors two of the studies

named above, and Alditia et al. (2025) re-read the triad through national civic vocabulary. This does not make the triad inauthentic. It does mean that a study which finds the triad in a school may be finding the framework that was brought to the school.

The religious setting of the triad is also hybrid in documented ways. Saharudin (2019) reads the symbols and myths of rice in Sasak culture as a portrait of hybrid Islam in Lombok. Umam et al. (2024) study the dialectic between Islam and local culture among Wetu Telu communities, and Mulyaningsih et al. (2023) report that Wetu Telu, now held by about two per cent of the population in their East Lombok study area, is eroded by formal modern Islamic education that promotes “Islam Kaffah”. Azwar et al. (2024) describe how the merariq marriage tradition has been simplified to align with Islam. Each of these cases shows custom and religion being sorted, and the sorting is carried by schools. A pedagogy of *tindih*, *maliq* and *merang* would take place within this sorting.

Sasak speech levels offer a second way into the same moral territory. Wilian and Husaini (2018) found that young people’s command of honorific vocabulary and speech-level construction was inadequate, with weak home transmission and Indonesian dominance among the causes. Mas’ud et al. (2026) report that *base alus* is typically used with school administrators and that code choice is a negotiation of relational power. Neither article names the triad. We treat speech levels as an observable vehicle of respect, and the connection with *tindih* as a hypothesis (Section 5.2).

Nahdlatul Wathan and Nahdlatul Ulama in Lombok

Nahdlatul Wathan was founded in 1953 by Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, whom followers call Hamzanwadi. Hamdi (2018) reports that it is a national minority yet the majority religious group in Lombok, with about 1,600 madrasah branches, and that its founder integrated local symbols, art, education and politics in his outreach. NW’s distinctive devotional practice is *Hizib*, which Ziadi (2018) treats as a Sufi order with political engagement and Rasyad et al. (2023) analyse as a driver of social change. NW education has been studied as a system with its own genealogy (Rasyad et al., 2021, 2026) and as a gendered project (Smith, 2023). NW has also been marked by internal division, including a conflict between two female-led factions (Hamdi & Smith, 2012).

Nahdlatul Ulama is better known nationally than locally. Arifianto (2017) argues that its decentralised structure leaves theological authority with local clerics who run independent pesantren, so “NU” is not a single actor. In Lombok, Rahman et al. (2021) date NU’s educational work to 1951 and its formal organisation to 1953 in Central Lombok. Beyond that, the island-specific scholarship on NU is sparse, and Section 4.4 treats this sparseness as a finding.

Both organisations face pressure from Salafi-oriented preachers who contest the authority of tuan guru and the legitimacy of customary ritual (Faizah, 2012; Saparudin, 2022). Documents on Lombok describe this contest in terms of authority, ritual and law more often than in terms of pedagogy, which is one reason why the pedagogical question has gone largely unasked.

Method

Design

The design is a comparative multi-site case synthesis. Two bounded cases are compared: Nahdlatul Wathan pesantren and madrasah in Lombok, and Nahdlatul Ulama pesantren in Lombok. Each case is constructed from the published studies that describe its institutions, and the “sites” are the institutional settings those studies report. A third group, studies of Sasak local wisdom with no organisational affiliation stated, is the bridge, because it is where the vernacular triad is actually named. The unit of analysis is the published study, and organisation is the unit of comparison. We do not claim that the comparison replicates a field design. Yin-style replication logic is borrowed only as an analytic discipline, in the sense of asking whether a pattern found in one case recurs in the other, and Yazan (2015) describes how this differs from Stake’s more interpretive stance. A case is treated as a bounded system in the sense of Thomas (2011), and the usual objections to single-case generalisation are answered by limiting claims to analytic and case-to-case inference (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Polit & Beck, 2010). Bray and Thomas (1995) argue that comparison should specify its level. Our levels are the organisation (NW or NU), the institution type (pesantren, school, community) and the pedagogical mechanism.

The synthesis method is critical interpretive synthesis (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006), chosen because the aim is to build an interpretive account and not to aggregate effects. Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009) show that qualitative synthesis methods differ in how far they are idealist or realist, and the interpretive end suits a question about meaning and mechanism. The a priori framework (vernacular value, mechanism, institutional idiom) follows the logic of best-fit framework synthesis, which begins from an existing conceptual model and extends it with themes from the data (Brunton et al., 2020; Carroll et al., 2011, 2013). Charting studies against the framework in a matrix follows Gale et al. (2013). Meta-ethnographic precedent shows that small sets of studies can support translation between concepts when the translation is explicit: Britten et al. (2002) worked with four papers and Atkins et al. (2008) with 44. Most of that precedent comes from health research, so its transfer to documents on Islamic education is an argument by analogy.

Search and Selection

Searches ran in October 2026 along five strands: NU and Aswaja pesantren in Lombok together with NW–NU relations; Sasak values and local wisdom in education; ethnopedagogy and character-education theory; comparative case and synthesis methodology; and traditionalist pesantren elsewhere in Indonesia. Search terms were in English and Indonesian, and they included the Sasak terms and organisational names. Searching used open web search and the landing pages of journals and publishers. Scopus and Web of Science were not queried, and the searches did not produce exportable records, so we cannot report a PRISMA-style count of records screened (Page et al., 2021). Figure 2 shows the flow that can honestly be reported. Searching and first-pass extraction were assisted by an AI model working under the authors' direction (see Declarations).

A study entered the Lombok analytic corpus if it was a peer-reviewed article with author, year, venue and DOI confirmed on a publisher or journal page, and if its subject was Islamic education, tuan guru or organisational authority, institutional history, ritual, or Sasak value education in Lombok. Studies from other regions were kept as out-of-site reference material and were not coded as evidence about Lombok.

Leads whose DOI or authorship could not be confirmed were dropped. The doi.org resolver and Crossref were not reachable during preparation, so every DOI still needs a resolver pass before submission; Appendix B lists the entries that need particular attention.

Coding

Each corpus study was coded on five fields. *Affiliation* was NW, NU, both, or no affiliation stated. A study was coded NW or NU only when the page read said so, even where context made an affiliation likely. *Site* was pesantren, ma'had or madrasah; school or university classroom; or community, ritual, authority and discourse. *Mechanism* recorded the primary pedagogical mechanism the study documents or discusses: exemplary modelling, ritual and communal participation, speech levels, curriculum or school culture, tuan guru or kiai authority, institutional history, or other. Three binary flags then recorded the evidence layers. V marked a study that names *tindih*, *malik* or *merang*. I marked a study that addresses character or value formation in an institutional idiom such as *uswah*, *akhlak*, *Aswaja* moderation or character education. P marked a study that describes a teaching practice or its enactment, as distinct from a concept or a perception. The coding follows directed content analysis, in which categories are derived from theory and then applied to text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), and the mechanisms were refined through a thematic reading of the corpus (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Document analysis principles guided the treatment of each article as a document produced for a purpose and an audience (Bowen, 2009).

The coding was done by one analyst from abstracts and first pages, not from full texts. That is a real limitation. There was no second coder, and no reliability statistic is reported. Appendix A gives every coding decision so that the authors or a second coder can repeat it.

Analysis and Quality

Analysis proceeded in three steps that match the research questions. We first tabulated where V is present (RQ1). We then compared the NW and NU cases across the framework dimensions and read the studies behind each cell (RQ2). Finally we formulated correspondences between the triad and each case's idiom and labelled each

as documented, inferred or untested (RQ3). Out-of-site studies on NU in Java and elsewhere were used only to sharpen the contrast. Wherever a claim goes beyond what a source states, the text says so.

Reporting follows the Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research as the primary guide (O'Brien et al., 2014), with ENTREQ for synthesis reporting (Tong et al., 2012) and eMERGe as a reference for interpretive synthesis (France et al., 2019). COREQ was consulted but applies mainly to interviews and focus groups (Tong et al., 2007). Trustworthiness was addressed through an audit trail in Appendix A, explicit coding rules, flagged inferences and limited transferability claims (Nowell et al., 2017; Shenton, 2004). Snyder (2019) was used as guidance for presenting the review as a method. Ethical approval was not needed because no human participants were involved.

Findings

The corpus

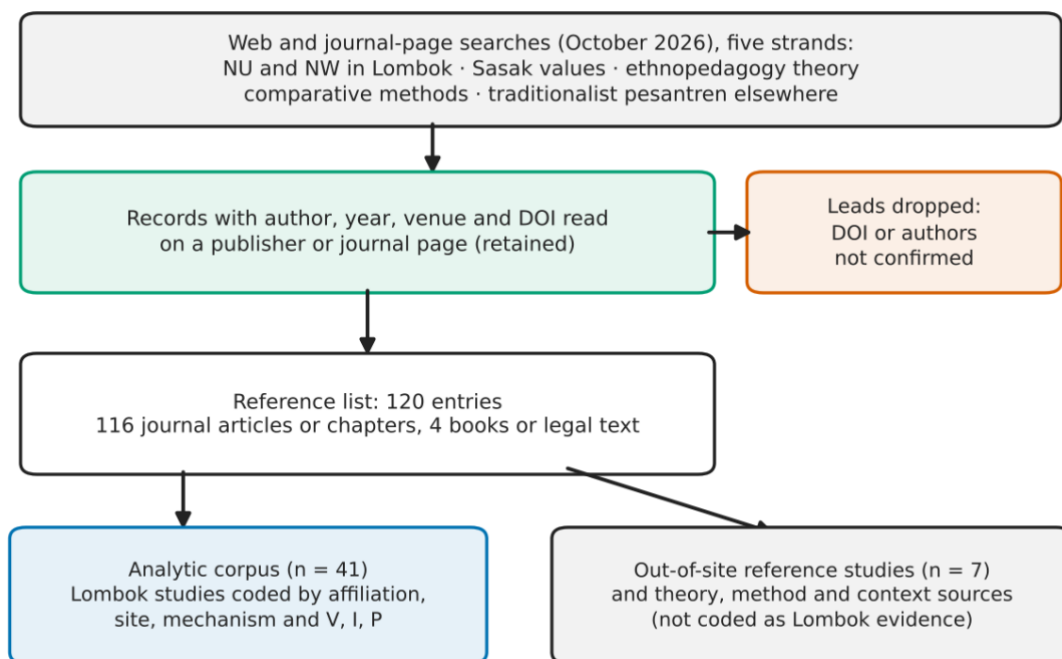
The analytic corpus contains 41 studies (Figure 2 and Table 1). Sixteen concern NW, two concern NU, three name both organisations and twenty state no affiliation. The studies are spread across pesantren, ma'had or madrasah settings (13), school or university classrooms (10) and community, ritual, authority or discourse settings (18). The most common primary mechanism is curriculum or school culture (12 studies), followed by authority (9), institutional history (6) and ritual participation (6). Exemplary modelling is the primary mechanism in only two studies, speech levels in three.

Table 1. Composition of the analytic corpus by organisational setting

Setting	n	Pesantren, ma'had or madrasah	School or university	Community, ritual or authority	V	I	P
Nahdlatul Wathan (NW)	16	7	1	8	0	5	4
Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)	2	1	0	1	0	0	1
Both named	3	1	0	2	0	0	0
No affiliation stated	20	4	9	7	6	15	12
Total	41	13	10	18	6	20	17

Note. V, vernacular triad named; I, character or value formation in an institutional idiom; P, teaching practice described. Coding from abstracts and first pages by one analyst.

Figure 2. Evidence flow from searches to the analytic corpus



No record-screening counts are reported: searches were not run in an exportable database.

Where the triad is named (RQ1)

Six studies name *tindih*, *malik* and *merang* (Table 2). None describes an NW or NU pesantren. Four concern schools or school culture, community life or civic education, and two are literary or performance analyses. The two studies with the strongest educational claims, Tohri et al. (2022) and Karomi et al. (2026), concern public primary and secondary schools in East Lombok, and Sudarwo et al. (2023) concerns a village community. As noted in Section 2.2, the definitions diverge on *merang*, and authorship overlaps across studies.

Table 2. Studies that name *tindih*, *malik* and *merang*

Study	Setting	How the triad is used	Layers
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Study	Setting	How the triad is used	Layers
Tohri et al. (2022)	East Lombok primary schools	Operating philosophies for local-wisdom character education; merang as work innovation	V, I
Sudarwo et al. (2023)	Village community, East Lombok	Tindih as primary value generating obedience, respect and proper conduct	V, I, P
Alditia et al. (2025)	Literature review, Pancasila learning	Tindih, maliq and merang mapped to Pancasila principles	V, I
Murahim et al. (2022)	Novel <i>Jatiswara</i>	Six behavioural patterns; merang as social solidarity	V
Marijo (2019)	Kemidi Rudat theatre	One of ten Sasak personal values, listed without definition	V
Karomi et al. (2026)	East Lombok secondary schools	Triad and sangkep in a school-culture development model	V, I, P

Note. Layers: V, vernacular triad named; I, institutional character idiom; P, teaching practice described. Coding is from abstracts and first pages.

The absence of V in the NW and NU studies is not proof that the values are absent from NW and NU schools. It means that the published literature on those schools does not use the vocabulary. Whether pupils, teachers and tuan guru use these words in daily life is an empirical question that the sources cannot answer.

The Nahdlatul Wathan Case (RQ2)

NW is the better documented case, and it is documented mainly through institutional idioms. Of 16 studies, none names the triad, five address character or value formation (I) and four describe a teaching practice (P). The mechanisms fall into five groups (Table 3).

Table 3. Pedagogical mechanisms documented in NW studies

Mechanism	Studies	What they report
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Mechanism	Studies	What they report
Exemplary modelling	Halqi and Muliadi (2021); Hadisaputra et al. (2020)	Prospective teachers' perception of the founder's example was "good", shaped by knowledge, with NW family involvement and institutional support as mediators (42 respondents); a textual analysis of the founder's writings yields nine teacher traits, including sincerity, obedience, trustworthiness, moral conduct like the teacher, lineage of transmission, wise speech, competence and perseverance
Ritual and communal participation	Wulandari and Rahman (2023); Supardi et al. (2022); Rasyad et al. (2023); Ziadi (2018)	Villagers use water blessed through hizib recitation for healing, harvest and study; communal hiziban brings reported calm and collective benefit; Hizib as a Sufi order with social and political reach
Curriculum integration	Thohri and Harapandi (2024); Khairi et al. (2024)	A pesantren curriculum stressing Islamic character, leadership and holistic development; a three-part model that integrates science, Islamic sciences and Ke-NW-an content
Authority	Muslim et al. (2022); Muhtador et al. (2023); Saparudin (2022); Hamdi and Smith (2012)	Tuan guru tradition in pesantren; authority shaped by discourse; desacralisation under Salafi competition; factional conflict
History and genealogy	Rasyad et al. (2021, 2026); Hamdi (2018); Smith (2023)	NW education as a system over time; the founder's integration of culture, education and politics; women's education and a "pious feminine"

The modelling studies deserve a closer look because they come nearest to the moral vocabulary of the triad without using it. The nine teacher traits that Hadisaputra et al. (2020) draw from the founder's writings include obedience, trustworthiness and moral conduct modelled on the teacher. These could be read as a pedagogical rendering of *tindih*, but the study frames them against teacher moral decline and never mentions the Sasak term. Halqi and Muliadi (2021) measured perception, not practice, among future mathematics teachers rather than pesantren pupils. We therefore code both as I without P. The two studies that most clearly describe a teaching programme are Thohri and Harapandi (2024), on a pesantren curriculum that stresses Islamic character and the

deployment of trained preachers, and Khairi et al. (2024), on integration across subject domains.

The ritual studies show a different mechanism. Hiziban is a communal practice, and the participants in Supardi et al. (2022) describe spiritual calm and blessing. Wulandari and Rahman (2023) describe knowledge transmitted by respected teachers and woven with local tradition. In Rogoff et al.'s (2003) terms this looks like learning through participation, but neither study frames it as pedagogy, and neither describes children's learning. Only one NW study, Thohri and Harapandi (2024), combines I and P in a pesantren. That is the whole of the direct evidence on character teaching in an NW pesantren in our corpus.

The Nahdlatul Ulama Case (RQ2)

The Lombok literature on NU is thin. Two studies are coded NU. Rahman et al. (2021) take a historiographic approach to eleven NU institutions in Central Lombok. They report that NU education began in 1951 and was formally organised in 1953, that the schools share consistent educational components, and that they moved from informal to formal structures while combining traditional and modern pedagogy. Fathurrahman and Wildan (2026) study NU ulama's digital preaching with Campbell's framework of religious authority and find that livestreamed sermons are combined with traditional mosque gatherings, so digital media reinforce embodied, community-based authority. A third study names both organisations. Fathorrahman (2022) compares three kinds of tuan guru leadership during the pandemic: passive (NW), proactive (NU) and reactive-rejective (unaffiliated). Congregations mirrored their tuan guru. It is the only direct NW–NU comparison we found, and it concerns mosques, not schools.

We found no study of NU pesantren kitab teaching, Aswaja instruction or the relation to Sasak custom in Lombok. A search for Aswaja An-Nahdliyah in Lombok returned only studies set in Java. In our corpus the NU case therefore has P in one study and I in none. This absence has two possible readings. NU pesantren in Lombok may simply be under-studied, or they may do less explicit local-wisdom work than NW. The sources cannot tell us which.

To avoid leaving the NU case empty, we read several NU studies from outside Lombok as contrast material, and we do not count them as evidence about the island. Anam et al. (2021) studied Aswaja An-Nahdliyah character in a pesantren and reported eight character traits with uneven results across knowledge, attitude and practice. Mubin et al. (2026) traced moderation in an NU madrasah in Jepara through curriculum, school ritual and student organisation, in stages from knowing to feeling to doing, with accommodation of local culture as one outcome indicator. Yumnah (2021) argues that Nusantara Islam, grounded in local cultural infrastructure, offers a model for national character education. Arifianto (2017) shows that NU's decentralised structure leaves authority with local clerics. Pribadi (2013) describes Madurese communities where pesantren, NU and kiai form the core of santri culture and where local mystical tradition persists alongside scriptural adherence. Azro'i and Fuaidi (2020) describe three models of pesantren leadership succession, genealogical, professional and hybrid. These studies suggest that an NU pesantren would carry moral vocabulary mainly through kiai authority, Aswaja teaching and moderation values, but they say nothing about *tindih*, *maliq* or *merang*.

The bridge: Sasak studies without an organisational label (RQ2)

Twenty studies state no affiliation, and they carry most of the evidence on practice (P in 12 of 20) and on character idiom (I in 15 of 20). Several are close to pesantren life. Nurlaela et al. (2024) studied a West Lombok pesantren where moral education was strengthened through Sasak Alus in Islamic lectures, role models, daily routines, speech training and community events. Johansyah et al. (2026) describe *tuan guru* at a West Lombok pesantren as moral exemplars and mediators. The abstract of neither study says whether the setting is NW or NU, so they cannot be assigned to either case, but they are the nearest approach to a pesantren in which language, example and routine operate together.

School-based studies show how local wisdom enters formal education. Pamungkas and Akbar (2026) report moderate implementation in West Lombok senior high schools, with moral integrity and discipline emphasised more than cultural awareness. Uswatun et al. (2026) describe cultural events at a West Lombok primary

school. Fadli (2023), Sayuti and Hafizin (2026), Arizona et al. (2025) and Wahyudiati (2022) integrate Sasak or Islamic local content into learning in various settings. Witriani et al. (2024) examine integrated Islamic elementary schools that signal a new style of Islam, a reminder that school types compete in the same cultural space. Murdianto (2021, 2023) describes the emergence of Lombok pesantren and the balance they strike between tradition and innovation, again without an organisational split in the coding.

Two further studies place such work in community and institutional settings. Sakinaturrahmi and Sudrajat (2025) describe a Central Lombok village where officials, spiritual leaders and young people keep heritage alive through festivals, curriculum integration and religious instruction. Mulianah (2024) examines how tuan guru and traditional institutions shape religious moderation among the Sasak, which links the authority theme to the character theme without using the vernacular terms. Work on religious symbols and social harmony in Lombok (Muhtar, 2021) completes this strand of community-level evidence.

Studies of speech levels complete the picture. Wilian and Husaini (2018) report low youth command of base alus, and Mas'ud et al. (2026) report that it is used with administrators and that code choice negotiates power. If speech levels carry respect, the weakness of home transmission puts pressure on institutions to teach them. Nurlaela et al. (2024) suggest that at least some pesantren do.

Comparing the two cases (RQ2, RQ3)

Table 4 charts the two cases against the framework dimensions. The comparison is asymmetric by construction, because one case has sixteen studies and the other has two.

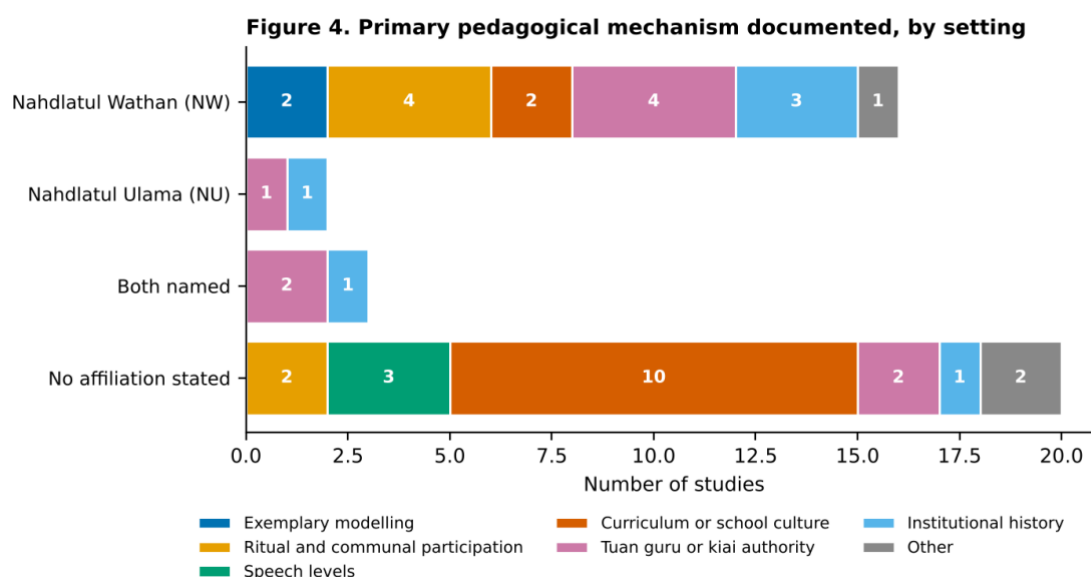
Table 4. Cross-case matrix

Dimension	NW (16 studies)	NU (2 studies, plus 3 naming both)
Organisational profile	Founded 1953; majority religious group in Lombok; about 1,600 madrasah branches (Hamdi, 2018)	Education began 1951, formally organised 1953; eleven institutions in Central Lombok (Rahman et al., 2021)
Vernacular triad named (V)	0 of 16	0 of 2

Dimension	NW (16 studies)	NU (2 studies, plus 3 naming both)
Character idiom (I)	5 of 16: uswah of the founder, teacher traits, curriculum stressing Islamic character	0 of 2 in Lombok; Aswaja moderation in Java studies (Anam et al., 2021; Mubin et al., 2026)
Practice described (P)	4 of 16: curriculum, hiziban, hizib water	1 of 2: combination of traditional and modern pedagogy
Distinctive carrier	Hizib ritual; founder's texts and example	Not documented in Lombok; kiai authority and Aswaja in other regions
Authority	Tuan guru; desacralised under Salafi pressure (Saparudin, 2022)	Ulama authority reinforced by digital preaching (Fathurrahman & Wildan, 2026); proactive stance in pandemic (Fathorrahman, 2022)
Relation to Sasak custom	Founder integrated local symbols and art (Hamdi, 2018)	No Lombok source
Shared ground	Aswaja identity; managers of traditional pesantren (Pardi et al., 2024); separate organisations (Fahrurrozi, 2018)	Same

Two patterns stand out. First, the two cases differ in what the literature emphasises. For NW it is a founder, a ritual and a curriculum. For NU it is institutional history and public authority. Second, they share an Aswaja identity and a distinction from Salafi and modernist schools (Pardi et al., 2024), and they are separate bodies (Fahrurrozi, 2018). That shared ground is important for the translation map in Section 5.2, because it suggests that any pedagogical mechanism common to traditionalist pesantren should appear in both.

	Vernacular triad named (V)	Character idiom (I)	Practice described (P)
Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) (n = 16)	0 / 16	5 / 16	4 / 16
Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) (n = 2)	0 / 2	0 / 2	1 / 2
Both named (n = 3)	0 / 3	0 / 3	0 / 3
No affiliation stated (n = 20)	6 / 20	15 / 20	12 / 20

Figure 3. Evidence layers by organisational setting (count of studies / n)

Discussion

A Naming Gap, Not an Absence

The clearest result is a gap between where the vernacular triad is named and where Islamic character formation is described. All six studies that name *tindih*, *malik* and *merang sit* outside NW and NU pesantren, and the 21 studies that describe those pesantren and organisations never use the words. Figure 3 shows the pattern: V appears only in the unaffiliated group, while I and P appear in NW and, to a smaller degree, in

the unaffiliated group. For NU in Lombok the evidence is close to silent on all three layers.

The simplest explanation is that pesantren already have their own moral vocabulary. NW texts speak of the founder's example and of the traits of a teacher (Hadisaputra et al., 2020), and NU studies elsewhere speak of Aswaja and moderation (Anam et al., 2021; Mubin et al., 2026). A pesantren that has *uswah* and *adab* has little need to import *tindih*, so researchers who look for the Sasak triad in a pesantren may be looking for a word the institution does not use. Public schools have no comparable inherited vocabulary, which may be why educators and researchers reach for the triad there (Karomi et al., 2026; Tohri et al., 2022). This is an interpretation. The sources show where the words appear, and they do not explain why.

A second reading is that the naming gap reflects who writes about what. The triad-explicit studies come from a connected group of authors in East Lombok and Mataram, and NW-focused studies come from a group that includes NW institutions' own scholars. Rahman et al. (2021) and Fathurrahman and Wildan (2026) show that NU scholarship exists, but it addresses history and preaching. The literature may therefore reflect research networks as much as pedagogical reality. A matched field design would be the only way to separate the two readings.

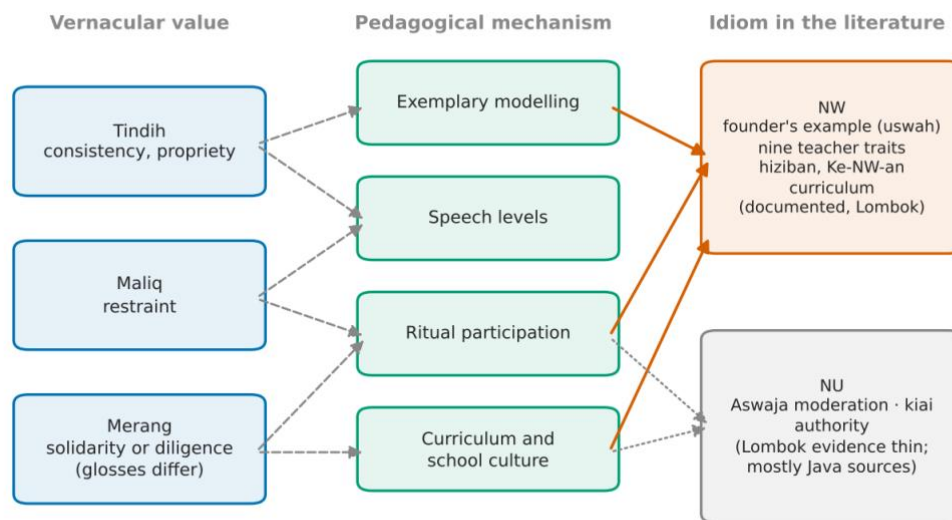
The two readings also have different consequences. If the gap reflects pedagogy, then promoting the triad in pesantren would introduce a vocabulary that sits beside an existing one, and teachers would need to decide whether the two refer to the same conduct. If the gap reflects research networks, then the triad may already be present in pesantren life under local names that no one has recorded. Either way, the first task of a field study is listening: finding out which words *santri* and teachers use for proper and improper conduct before offering them the words that the literature prefers.

A Translation Map

Because the triad and the institutional idioms are not linked in any source, we propose correspondences as hypotheses (Figure 5, Table 5). The map moves from a vernacular value to a mechanism and from the mechanism to the idiom in which each organisation's literature describes it. Dashed arrows are untested. Solid arrows mark the

mechanisms for which NW has documented evidence, and dotted arrows mark weak evidence for NU.

Figure 5. Proposed translation map between the triad and institutional idioms



Dashed grey: proposed correspondence, not tested in any source read. Solid: documented for NW. Dotted: weakly documented for NU.

Table 5. Propositions from the translation map

No.	Proposition	Basis	Status
P1	Tindih is carried mainly by exemplary modelling: pupils learn consistency of word and deed from a teacher whose conduct is the curriculum.	NW teacher traits (Hadisaputra et al., 2020); founder's example (Halqi & Muliadi, 2021); hidden-curriculum pillar of exemplary leadership (Homsiyah et al., 2026); faculty modelling (Aji et al., 2026)	Inferred
P2	Respect in speech levels is a behavioural face of tindih, and pesantren act as compensating institutions where home transmission of base alus weakens.	Speech-level decline (Wilian & Husaini, 2018); base alus with administrators (Mas'ud et al., 2026); Sasak Alus in a pesantren (Nurlaela et al., 2024)	Inferred; affiliation unknown
P3	Maliq, as restraint, is carried by communal ritual, routine and dormitory discipline more than by explicit instruction.	Hiziban and calm (Supardi et al., 2022); dormitory environment (Homsiyah et al., 2026)	Untested

No.	Proposition	Basis	Status
P4	Merang cannot be tested until its meaning is fixed, because sources gloss it as work innovation or as solidarity.	Tohri et al. (2022); Murahim et al. (2022)	Definitional
P5	NW and NU differ less in the values they teach than in the carriers: founder's texts and Hizib in NW, kiai authority and Aswaja moderation in NU.	NW evidence in Section 4.3; NU evidence from outside Lombok in Section 4.4	Speculative
P6	The triad is named explicitly more often where no organisation claims authority to certify it (public schools, communities) than where tuan guru or kiai authority already certifies conduct (pesantren).	Distribution of V in Table 1 and Figure 3	Inferred from a coding pattern

Two of these propositions are close to the evidence and two are not. P1 and P2 rest on documents that describe mechanisms plausibly related to *tindih*, though none uses the word. P3 and P5 would need data that no source supplies. P4 is a warning more than a proposition: a test that fixes *merang* as “solidarity” would silently adopt one side of a definitional difference.

Ethnopedagogy as Contested

The critiques in Section 2.1 help to read what the corpus does not say. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) caution against treating cultural traits as properties of a group. A Lombok study that finds *tindih* in a school and concludes that “Sasak culture” is being transmitted would do that, since Sasak communities include NW, NU, Salafi-oriented and Wetu Telu followers, and the island's Muslims disagree about customary ritual (Fitriani, 2015; Ibrahim et al., 2024; Sukardiman, 2022). Zipin (2009) warns that teachers choose comfortable knowledge. The triad is a comfortable set of values: honesty, restraint and solidarity are hard to oppose. The harder knowledge, such as which ritual a *tuan guru* will endorse and which a Salafi-oriented teacher will refuse, appears in the studies of authority and ritual (Saparudin, 2022; Said, 2019) and not in the studies of value education. Paris and Alim (2014) describe youth practices as dynamic and sometimes reproducing inequality. Smith (2023) on women's education in NW and the gendered preferences that Uswatun et al. (2026) noticed in a West Lombok

school point in this direction, but neither is developed as a critique of how the values are distributed.

Evidence from Java shows that the same ambiguity attends local ritual elsewhere. The slametan has been read as a pillar of Islam Nusantara (Muqoddam & Maghfiroh, 2019) and, in a different study, as a site of honour and symbolic power in which Muslims negotiate status (Nasir, 2019). If a ritual can be both, then a school that teaches a Sasak value through ritual is choosing among readings, and the studies reviewed here seldom say which reading the school has chosen.

The authority question is central. In pesantren, tuan guru and kiai certify conduct. Tuan guru authority is itself contested (Muhtador et al., 2023; Saparudin, 2022), and Hamdi and Smith (2012) show factional conflict within NW. If a value such as *tindih* is certified by a tuan guru whose own legitimacy is disputed, then its transmission is entangled with that dispute. This is why P6 is plausible. Public schools can name the triad because no one in them holds a tuan guru's certifying role, and pesantren may leave it unnamed because the authority they already hold makes the name unnecessary or risky. Akhter (2026) offers a vocabulary for teaching under such conditions. Her framework of deliberation, consultation and the etiquette of disagreement begins from the assumption that Muslims will disagree and that education should prepare pupils for it. It has not been applied to Lombok, but the *sangkep* (deliberation) that Karomi et al. (2026) link to the triad suggests that the Sasak tradition has its own resource for this.

Finally, the triad itself is being reshaped as it circulates. Alditia et al. (2025) read it through Pancasila, and Tohri et al. (2022) read it through the structure of school curricula. Neither is wrong, but each makes the triad serve a policy purpose, and the Ministry's moderation indicators (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019) invite this. Studies of other regions show similar moves, in which local wisdom is selected and reframed within an institution's own priorities (Bahri et al., 2023; Bukhari et al., 2026). The risk is that "local wisdom" becomes whatever fits the curriculum.

1. 5.4 Implications

For policy and curriculum design, the main implication is modest. Programmes that import the triad into pesantren should first ask which vocabulary the pesantren already uses to teach the same conduct and should build on that. Moderation programmes in pesantren have been described as working through the hidden curriculum, ritual and leadership (Aji et al., 2026; Siswanto et al., 2024; Umar et al., 2024), and this matches the mechanisms in Figure 4. A teacher-development approach, in line with the obstacle that Sugara and Sugito (2022) identify, would train teachers to recognise the mechanisms that already operate. It would not require them to teach a list of Sasak values. In practice this means documenting how a school's *uswah*, speech practice and ritual routines already carry respect and restraint before adding new content.

Any programme of this kind should also say how it will be evaluated. Berkowitz and Bier (2004) found that rigorous evidence on character education had been inconsistent for decades, and Maulana (2022) found that teachers in Indonesian senior high schools often chose character traits from circumstance and rarely evaluated them. A pesantren that adopts the triad as a teaching framework should therefore define each value in observable terms, record how it is modelled and practised, and check with pupils and families whether the definition matches their own. Without that step, a framework can be adopted with enthusiasm and leave no trace in conduct.

For the relation between NW and NU, the shared Aswaja ground (Pardi et al., 2024) suggests that cooperation need not wait for agreement on local custom. A pedagogical mechanism that both organisations already use, such as exemplary modelling, offers a neutral starting point. Evidence for this suggestion is indirect and should be treated as a hypothesis for the field work below.

For research, the findings argue for treating organisation as a design variable. The pesantren literature often compares traditionalist, modernist and Salafi types (Harto et al., 2025; Malik, 2024) or Muhammadiyah and NU (Hamami, 2021). A comparison within the traditionalist type, NW against NU in the same district, would test whether differences in carrier matter.

2. 5.5 A matched-pair field protocol

The study that the title promises is a field study, and Table 6 sets out how it could be done. The design is a multiple-case study with a matched pair of NW pesantren and a matched pair of NU pesantren in one district, so that district context is held constant. Cross-case comparison would use the V, I and P coding adopted here, applied to primary data instead of abstracts.

Table 6. Field protocol for a matched-pair test

Element	Specification
Cases	Two NW and two NU pesantren in one district of Lombok, matched on size, age and gender composition; both single-sex and mixed settings considered
Data	Participant observation of daily routine, kitab sessions and ritual; semi-structured interviews with tuan guru or kiai, teachers, santri and alumni; curriculum, rule and schedule documents; recordings of speech-level use
Sampling of values	Participants name their own words for proper conduct before the triad is introduced; the triad is then probed, and informants gloss merang in their own terms
Coding	V, I and P applied to field notes and transcripts; mechanisms (modelling, speech levels, ritual, curriculum, authority) coded inductively and compared with the map in Figure 5
Analysis	Within-case thematic analysis first, then cross-case matrix (Gale et al., 2013); explicit search for disconfirming cases and for contested practices
Quality	Second coder; reflexive memos; member checking with participants; audit trail (Nowell et al., 2017)
Ethics	Institutional approval; consent from adults and guardians; protection of tuan guru and santri identities where affiliation is sensitive

Conclusion

We asked whether the Sasak values of tindih, maliq and merang appear in the education that NW and NU pesantren provide in Lombok, and how the two organisations compare. The answer from forty-one published studies is that the triad is named only outside these pesantren, in public schools, a village community, a novel and a theatre tradition. NW pesantren are documented through other idioms, mainly the founder's example, teacher traits, communal ritual and curriculum, and the NU literature on Lombok is too thin to support a pedagogical comparison. The distance between the vernacular triad and the institutional literature is the main finding.

We read this as a naming gap and as a prompt to treat ethnopedagogy as a set of mechanisms rather than a list of values. The translation map suggests that modelling and speech levels are the likeliest carriers of *tindih*, that ritual and routine are the likeliest carriers of *malik*, and that *merang* needs definition before it can be tested. It also suggests that NW and NU differ mainly in their carriers. These suggestions are hypotheses.

The study that the title describes remains to be done. A matched pair of NW and NU pesantren in one district, observed over a term, with informants' own words for proper conduct recorded before the triad is introduced, would show whether the values travel, by what route and with whose authority. Until then, claims that Sasak local wisdom shapes character in NW or NU pesantren should be read as claims about a framework that has been proposed, not about practice that has been observed.

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