

Agus Sunyoto's Thoughts on the Uniqueness of Nusantara Islamic Education: An Analysis of PRAMISTARA

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Received: November 15, 2025

Revised: January 05, 2026

Accepted: January 27, 2026

Abstract

This article examines Agus Sunyoto's ideas on the distinctiveness of Nusantara Islamic education as articulated through the Pramistara (Pesantren Ramadhan Islam Nusantara) program, which emerges as a response to the challenges of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach through literature review and narrative analysis of Pramistara's texts, lectures, and documents, this study applies Michel Foucault's archaeology of knowledge to trace how Sunyoto constructs the discourse of Nusantara Islam across historical, epistemological, and power-related layers that legitimize Pramistara as a continuation of the archipelagic Islamic tradition. In addition, Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy is used to examine how Pramistara's educational practices foster dialogical learning, critical consciousness, and socio-spiritual awareness in addressing contemporary issues. The findings indicate that Pramistara is not merely a Ramadan study forum, but a strategic educational space that integrates pesantren traditions, Indonesian historical narratives, Sufism, and global issues such as geopolitics, proxy wars, and cryptocurrency. Through this integrative approach, Agus Sunyoto positions Nusantara Islamic education as a model that balances intellectual rigor with spiritual transformation, while simultaneously reinforcing local identity in the face of global secularizing forces. Foucault's framework elucidates the knowledge structures that underpin the discourse of Nusantara Islam, whereas Freire's theory underscores Pramistara's role in cultivating critical, reflective, and moderate learners. Consequently, Pramistara emerges as an alternative educational model that sustains continuity with tradition while equipping the younger generation to navigate the challenges of a disruptive era.

Keywords: Agus Sunyoto, Globalization, Islam Nusantara, Pesantren.

1. Introduction

Globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution have profoundly transformed nearly every aspect of human life. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), and industrial automation has generated an increasingly interconnected global order, while simultaneously contributing to the erosion of local cultural, ethical, and spiritual boundaries (Schwab, 2016). Within this context, Islamic education faces a fundamental challenge: how to preserve its distinctive identity, epistemological traditions, and moral values while remaining responsive to accelerating global change. Education can no longer be understood merely as a process of knowledge transmission; rather, it has become a critical arena for fostering reflective awareness, ethical discernment, and character formation, enabling learners to critically engage with transnational ideologies and the expanding influence of cultural secularization (Freire, 2000). Recent studies indicate that Islamic educational institutions, particularly pesantren, are increasingly required to integrate digital literacy and critical awareness without undermining their moral and spiritual foundations (Happyana, Khaudli, and Istiqomah, 2025).

Within the global discourse on Islamic education, Indonesia occupies a distinctive position due to its long-standing tradition of Nusantara Islam, particularly as embodied in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). Historically, pesantren have functioned not only as institutions for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, but also as centers for preserving local culture and cultivating religious moderation and national consciousness (Dhofier, 2011). However, the openness of the digital era and the pressures of globalization require pesantren to continuously adapt their educational strategies in order to remain relevant, without sacrificing their traditional foundations. Contemporary research on pesantren, madrasahs, and Islamic schools in Indonesia confirms that these institutions increasingly negotiate between global educational demands and the preservation of Islamic identity and national character (Zahra, 2025). This dynamic has encouraged the emergence of various models of Nusantara Islamic education that seek to mediate the relationship between tradition, modernity, and global challenges.

One of the contemporary initiatives in this field is the Pramistara (Pesantren Ramadan Islam Nusantara) program, initiated by Agus Sunyoto, a historian, cultural figure, and intellectual affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama. Pramistara represents an educational innovation that combines classical pesantren learning traditions with critical engagement with global issues, including geopolitics, proxy wars, digital technology, and contemporary cultural transformations. Rather than functioning merely as a forum for Ramadan Qur'anic recitation, Pramistara is designed as a pedagogical space that integrates rational ('aqliyyah) and spiritual (qalbiyyah) dimensions, with the aim of strengthening both Islamic consciousness and national identity amid global uncertainty. This approach resonates with recent discussions on the emergence of "Santri 5.0," which emphasize the importance of critical digital literacy, ethical awareness, and identity formation among pesantren students in the era of globalization (Nasution et al., 2025).

Previous studies have highlighted the adaptive and cosmopolitan character of Islamic education in the Indonesian archipelago. Azra (2019) demonstrates that Islamic

educational institutions in Nusantara have historically been capable of absorbing external influences while maintaining their traditional foundations. Similarly, Rahman, 1982 emphasizes the importance of integrating local traditions with critical and contextual thinking in order to cultivate inclusive and intellectually resilient Muslim societies. In the Indonesian context, Wahid, Fauzi, and Rahmawati, 2020 argue that pesantren play a strategic role in fostering religious moderation and national awareness through curricula grounded in Nusantara Islam. Collectively, these studies underscore the continued relevance of Islamic education in responding to contemporary global challenges.

However, despite the growing body of literature on Islamic education, pesantren reform, and Nusantara Islam, there is still a lack of research that specifically examines the Pramistara program as an educational model rooted in the thought of Agus Sunyoto. In particular, existing studies have not sufficiently explored how Sunyoto's ideas on Nusantara Islamic education are translated into concrete pedagogical practices, nor how these practices contribute to the formation of critical awareness and national identity among pesantren students in the era of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This gap is significant, given the increasing importance of contextual and locally grounded models of Islamic education within the global discourse on religious education.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to analyze how Agus Sunyoto's ideas on Nusantara Islamic education are implemented through the Pramistara program and to examine the role of this program in shaping critical awareness and national identity among pesantren students amid ongoing global transformation. By focusing on Pramistara as a case study, this research contributes to the broader discourse on Islamic education by offering an empirically grounded and contextually rich account of how tradition-oriented Islamic pedagogy can respond creatively to contemporary global challenges (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

2. Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an in-depth understanding of Agus Sunyoto's ideas on Nusantara Islamic education as manifested in the Pramistara (Pesantren Ramadhan Islam Nusantara) program. This approach is chosen because it enables the researcher to interpret the meanings embedded in actions, texts, and cultural practices within Pramistara, understood as a form of contemporary pesantren-based educational praxis (Moleong, 2019).

Data were collected through literature research and narrative analysis. The literature review examined Agus Sunyoto's key works, including *Atlas of Walisongo*, *Suluk Abdul Jalil*, lecture manuscripts, and Pramistara archival materials, in order to reconstruct the development of his ideas on Nusantara Islam and education. Narrative analysis was employed to interpret how Sunyoto constructs discourses on Islamic culture and education in the Nusantara context, particularly in response to globalization and the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Sugiyono, 2017).

The theoretical framework integrates Michel Foucault's archaeology of knowledge and Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy in a complementary manner. Foucault's archaeology of knowledge is employed to uncover the discursive formations underlying Agus Sunyoto's ideas, particularly the historical, epistemological, and ideological construction of Nusantara Islam. This framework enables the analysis of how knowledge,

power, and discourse operate in shaping educational narratives within Pramistara (Foucault, 2002). Meanwhile, Freire's critical pedagogy is used to examine the pedagogical praxis of Pramistara, with particular attention to the process of *conscientização*, through which participants move from naïve consciousness toward critical awareness through dialogue, reflection, and social engagement (Freire, 2000). Thus, Foucault's framework functions as a tool for discursive analysis, while Freire's theory provides an interpretive lens for understanding the transformative dimensions of educational practice.

In addition to document analysis, in-depth interviews were conducted with two Pramistara alumni: Diaz Nawaksara (Didin Ahmad Zainuddin), a participant from the 2015 cohort, and Rizka Bintang Agus Satriya (Arya), a participant from the 2021 cohort. The informants were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria, including active participation throughout the program, involvement in post-program networks, and representation of different generational phases of Pramistara. Although limited in number, these interviews serve as supplementary data intended to provide empirical illustration and to corroborate findings derived from documentary and narrative analysis, rather than to achieve statistical generalization.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles and Huberman, 1994). All data were first interpreted within the framework of Foucault's archaeology of knowledge to identify underlying discursive formations, and were subsequently analyzed through the lens of Freire's critical pedagogy to elucidate Pramistara's role as a contextual and transformative model of Nusantara Islamic education.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Islamic Boarding Schools as a Typical Islamic Education in Nusantara

One of Agus Sunyoto's recurring concerns is how individuals can remain morally upright amid the rapid advancement of modern life in its various dimensions. The transformations driven by globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution demand that humanity, particularly Muslims, sustain moral and spiritual values while navigating the challenges of an ever-changing era.

This concern is also reflected in Agus Sunyoto's paper presented at the National Focus Group Discussion (FGD) entitled "Religion in the Midst of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Globalization," organized by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Jakarta on April 7, 2021. In his paper, "Cultural Strategy of Indonesian Muslims Facing the Fourth Industrial Revolution," Sunyoto emphasizes the importance of cultural strategies that enable Indonesian Muslims to remain relevant and empowered amid rapid technological change, while preserving their identity and the noble values that form the foundation of communal life.

The era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, first articulated by German economist Klaus Schwab, refers to a period marked by digitalization and automation driven by the convergence of cyber and manufacturing systems, which began in the early decades of the twenty-first century. Agus Sunyoto envisions technological developments over the next decade, depicting a future in which humans increasingly coexist with robots, machines, and cybernetic systems. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, digital currencies (cryptocurrencies), nanotechnology and biotechnology products, electric vehicles,

autonomous cars, 3D printing, Internet of Things (IoT)-based factories, advanced energy storage, and quantum computing are expected to become integral to everyday life. However, amid these rapid developments, some individuals may experience difficulties adapting to an increasingly complex and technology-driven environment.

Sunyoto recognized that this reality would fundamentally transform ways of thinking, perspectives, life values, and modes of human activity, as the convergence of the physical, digital, and biological worlds would reshape paradigms across multiple domains, including economics, socio-political life, culture, industry, governance, and even religion (Sugiyono, 2017).

According to Sunyoto, although advances in science and technology have significantly reduced famine, epidemics, and armed conflict in recent decades, a paradoxical reversal has emerged. Today, more people die from overeating than from starvation. Many deaths are linked to the consumption of unhealthy or ultra-processed foods, illustrating the detrimental consequences of uncontrolled consumption, even as technological progress has largely alleviated the problem of global hunger. Amid the intense dynamics of globalization, marked by growing human dependence on the internet, smartphones, and cyber technology, there is an increasing tendency for individuals to surrender their lives entirely to technological progress, resulting in the erosion of their human essence. In response to this condition, Sunyoto emphasizes the need to reawaken human awareness of their existence as multidimensional beings who are not merely physical and material, but also composed of intangible spiritual elements (Moleong, 2019). Intellectual knowledge and spiritual knowledge, therefore, should not be positioned in opposition; rather, both must be harmonized. Modern modes of thought tend to marginalize intuition, rendering contemporary science predominantly analytical and speculative, with strong secular and materialistic orientations. According to Sunyoto, there is no alternative but to re-actualize the concept of Islamic education known as *Tarbiyah wa Ta'lim*, which continues to be traditionally practiced in Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated pesantren.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), often portrayed as a traditionalist organization overseeing Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), has demonstrated a notable capacity to respond to the challenges of globalization. Through culturally grounded strategies rooted in the pesantren tradition, NU has developed forms of resistance to globalization that emphasize the revitalization of local values. These strategies have contributed to the reinforcement of cultural and religious identities in Indonesia and other societies increasingly unsettled by the adverse effects of globalization. This dynamic is particularly evident in response to the rapid expansion of what is described as the "religion of common sense," or techno-religion, including schools of thought such as Techno-Humanism and Dataism, which alongside Neo-Paganism, have gained traction in the wake of globalization (Arifin, 2023).

At a seminar entitled "*Opening the Window on Education: Unraveling Traditions and Integrating the Roots of Education in Indonesia*," held on March 7, 2021, Sunyoto argued that any discussion of education in Indonesia must begin with an understanding of the diverse educational concepts that have evolved across the archipelago throughout history. He emphasized that the contemporary education system largely reflects Western paradigms, which prioritize the development of reason and logic. However, Sunyoto also underscored that education is, in essence, a broader and deeper process, one that depends not only on rationality but also on intuition and inner understanding. In this context, he invited seminar participants to reflect on Indonesia's indigenous educational traditions,

which offer more holistic and balanced approaches to the development of human potential (Universitas Tribakti Lirboyo, 2021).

During the Hindu-Buddhist period, education in the archipelago was conducted in institutions known as *dukuh*. Students who studied in these institutions were referred to as *wiku*. A *wiku* was required to show reverence to three teachers, known as *triguru*: parents, a spiritual teacher, and a ruler or king. Respect for these three authorities constituted a fundamental basis for the moral and character formation of a *wiku*. In addition to this ethical framework, *wiku* were also bound by specific disciplinary rules, one of which was *bhaksana*, a code governing dietary conduct. Under this code, a *wiku* was prohibited from consuming certain foods regarded as forbidden, such as pork, dog, and cat meat. Moreover, a *wiku* was expected to observe proper eating practices, including eating only when hungry and practicing moderation rather than excessive consumption.

Furthermore, a *wiku* was required to embody the virtue of *satiya*, which refers to honesty and purity of speech (*wakparsha*). This included refraining from insulting language, avoiding self-deprecation, and abstaining from complaints or verbal abuse. In addition, a *wiku* was expected to avoid falsehood (*jalamadwa*) and to faithfully observe *vratha*, a form of disciplined conduct governing daily life. This discipline encompassed regulations concerning food, drink, clothing, residence, and personal adornment, collectively known as *satyaratta*.

One aspect of *satyaratta* that closely parallels Islamic teachings is the regulation concerning permissible and impermissible food and drink. A *wiku* was prohibited from consuming certain animals, including dogs (*swana*), porcupines, lizards, turtles, rhinoceroses, cats (*kuuku*), rats, tigers, monkeys, frogs (*wiyung*), wild birds (*krurapaksi*), crows (*nilapaksi*), flies (*laler*), bedbugs, lice (*tuma*), caterpillars, and earthworms (*bhukhrimi*), among others. These animals were regarded as impure or unsuitable for consumption by a *wiku*, reflecting a conception of dietary purity that bears significant resemblance to Islamic notions of cleanliness and *halal-haram* regulation.

Furthermore, *wiku* were also required to abstain from intoxicating beverages, such as palm wine (*tuak*), chives-based liquor (*kucai*), *brem*, and *siu*. These regulations reflect the depth of the teachings concerned with maintaining both physical and mental purity. Although these teachings originate from a pre-Islamic historical context, the life principles embodied in *yamabrata* can still be observed in the practices of students in contemporary Islamic boarding schools. Such principles emphasize discipline in everyday life and the cultivation of personal purity, encompassing both physical and spiritual dimensions (Sunnyoto, 2017).

Agus Sunnyoto explains that the term *pondok pesantren* was coined by Raden Sahid, better known as Shaykh Malaya or Sunan Kalijaga, an influential figure in the history of Islam in Indonesia and a fourth-generation disciple of the Padepokan Giri Amparan Jati. According to Sunnyoto, the term *pondok* is derived from the Arabic word *funduq*, meaning "accommodation" or "lodging," while *santri* originates from the Sanskrit word *shastri*, which refers to "one who studies the sacred scriptures." The combination of these two terms, *pondok* and *pesantren*, thus denotes a residential space for students engaged in the study of sacred knowledge.

Sunnyoto further explains that this definition not only captures the function of *pondok pesantren* as institutions of learning, but also reflects the convergence of two major cultural traditions that have shaped the *pesantren* educational system. On the one hand,

Arab culture, the historical birthplace of Islam has contributed significantly to the religious and pedagogical dimensions of *pesantren*. On the other hand, Hindu cultural influences, which have long permeated the spiritual and social life of Indonesian society, have also played an important role. Consequently, the term *pondok pesantren* embodies a harmonious synthesis between local traditions and external influences, which together constitute the distinctive identity of Islamic education in Indonesia (Sunyoto, 2017).

In line with this, Said Aqil Siroj (2015) emphasizes that during the era of the Wali Songo, educational institutions that had previously been rooted in Hindu-Buddhist traditions gradually transformed into Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Within these *pesantren*, Islamic teachings were transmitted deeply to the wider community through the systematic study of authoritative religious texts. This educational process eventually gave rise to prominent scholars (*kiai*) whose influence extended beyond religious life into social and political spheres, leaving a lasting mark on the history of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. Figures such as Paku Buwono VI, Prince Sambenyowo (Mangkunegoro I), and Prince Diponegoro exemplify *pesantren* graduates who possessed not only religious knowledge but also political acumen and strategic leadership in resistance movements. Their roles underscore the central position of *pesantren* as crucibles of Islamic education and as pivotal institutions in the broader process of Islamization in the Indonesian archipelago (Siroj, 2015).

Agus Sunyoto's ideas, disseminated through various media such as writings and public lectures, are not articulated as a systematic or comprehensive formulation of the epistemology of Islam Nusantara. Rather, his contributions function to enrich and expand the thematic dimensions within the broader discourse of Islam Nusantara. Building on this premise, the following chapter examines the processes through which Agus Sunyoto's ideas were disseminated, received by the public, and subsequently actualized in concrete practices that contributed to the consolidation and development of Islam Nusantara discourse.

3.2. Pramistara (Nusantara Islamic Ramadan Islamic Boarding School)

During the month of Ramadan, many Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) organize a tradition known as *Ngaji Posonan* or *Ngaji Pasaran*. This tradition attracts students from various regions, including from abroad, who come to the *pesantren* to study classical Islamic texts, receive a *sanad* (chain of transmission) of knowledge from the *kiai*, and obtain authorization (*ijazah*) for specific *wirid* (litanies). The term *Posonan* originates from the Javanese word *poso*, meaning fasting. Meanwhile, *ngaji* is derived from the word *aji*, which connotes honor, value, or dignity. In this sense, *ngaji* refers not merely to the act of studying, but to a process of cultivating moral and spiritual dignity as a human being. *Ngaji Posonan* thus signifies an intensive learning process undertaken during the fasting month within the *pesantren* environment. In contemporary usage, this tradition is often referred to as *Ngaji Pasaran*, and in Indonesian it is commonly known as *Pesantren Ramadan* or *Pesantren Kilat*. A distinctive feature of *Ngaji Posonan* is the intensive study schedule, through which the selected texts are typically completed before the end of Ramadan.

In Central Java, many Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) routinely organize the *Posonan* program as an integral part of their religious and educational activities during Ramadan. Indeed, almost every *pesantren* maintains an annual *Posonan* tradition,

which plays a significant role in shaping the intellectual and spiritual life of students. One prominent example is the Al Anwar Sarang Islamic Boarding School in Rembang, widely known for its consistently vibrant *Posonan* program. Each year, the text studied in this program differs, thereby offering students a diverse and in-depth learning experience. For instance, in 2016, under the leadership of KH Maimoen Zubair, the *pesantren* studied *Syajarat al-Ma'arif wa al-Akhwar wa Shurat al-Akhwar wa al-Amar*, a monumental work by Shaykh 'Izz al-Din ibn 'Abd al-Salam. In the preceding Ramadan of 2015, KH Maimoen Zubair selected *Irshad al-'Ibad*, a work by Shaykh 'Izz al-Din ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Malibari. The intensive study of this text, which required deep comprehension, was completed within fifteen days. Beyond the transmission of religious knowledge, KH Maimoen Zubair also conferred *ijazah* (certificates of authorization and transmission) upon students who participated in the *Posonan* program, serving as formal recognition of their mastery and understanding of the material studied (Muhammad, 2016). Against this broader backdrop of Ramadan-based *pesantren* traditions, Agus Sunyoto initiated a distinctive form of Ramadan Islamic education in 2015 known as *Pramistara (Pesantren Ramadan Islam Nusantara)*. Unlike conventional *Pesantren Ramadan*, *Pramistara* was designed not merely as an intensive study of classical texts, but as an integrative educational space that combined *pesantren* traditions with critical reflection on history, culture, and contemporary global issues.

3.3. The Image of Pramistara

Pramistara (Pesantren Ramadan Islam Nusantara) is a short-term educational program, typically conducted over three to four days, which integrates workshops and seminars within a *pesantren*-based learning atmosphere. Initiated by Agus Sunyoto, the program is designed to explore, preserve, and further develop Indonesia's rich cultural and Islamic heritage. Grounded in the principle of "Obah Ora Owah", which emphasizes the necessity of change without abandoning foundational identity, *Pramistara* reflects Agus Sunyoto's commitment to cultural transformation that remains rooted in traditional values. Through a series of interdisciplinary studies, the program seeks to broaden participants' historical and cultural awareness, particularly among the younger generation, enabling them to critically engage with their heritage while responding to contemporary challenges.

Furthermore, the program is designed to prepare participants for future challenges by equipping them with a solid understanding of national identity and historical consciousness. In this sense, *Pramistara* functions not merely as a learning initiative, but as a formative educational endeavor aimed at preparing the next generation to navigate contemporary transformations while upholding noble cultural and moral values. According to Zulfikar Muhammad, *Pramistara* can be understood as a short-term, intensive educational program with an approach comparable to *Pondok Ramadan*. He explains that *Pramistara* is not intended to formulate legal rulings, as in *Bahtsul Masail*, but rather to examine the processes through which contemporary issues emerge and develop.

Zulfikar Muhammad further notes that participants are encouraged indeed, at times compelled to think in a moderate and geopolitical framework, to understand psychological warfare and asymmetrical conflicts, and to engage with the thought patterns of global figures whose ideas have shaped contemporary discourse. Through this process, students are not only trained to be textually competent in engaging with religious texts, but are

also stimulated to think critically, remain responsive to current developments, and engage with emerging issues such as cryptocurrencies (Wawancara Zulfikar Muhammad, 2024).

Pramistara is designed to cultivate critical and moderate modes of thinking among participants by engaging them with contemporary issues and ongoing global developments, including geopolitics, psychological warfare, and emerging challenges such as cryptocurrency. This approach demonstrates that the religious and intellectual formation offered by the program is not confined to textual interpretation or the memorization of scriptures, but instead encompasses a broader and more contextual understanding of an ever-changing world.

In addition to Agus Sunyoto himself, the presenters at Pramistara consist of figures from diverse professional backgrounds, including academics, literacy activists, cultural practitioners, and religious leaders, all of whom are rooted in the Nahdhiyin Islamic tradition. Among them are Prof. Dr. KH. Imron Arifin, Professor at the State University of Malang; KH. Jadul Maula, caretaker of the Kaliopak Cultural Islamic Boarding School in Bantul, Yogyakarta, as well as a former PMII activist and a prominent figure in social advocacy and literacy movements at LKiS Yogyakarta, who served as Deputy Chair of Lesbumi (2010-2021) and Chair of Lesbumi (2021-2027); and Tuan Guru Hasan Basri Marwah, a Lombok-based preacher, essayist, and educator at the Kaliopak Cultural Islamic Boarding School in Bantul, along with other invited speakers.

In its initial implementation, Pramistara accepted high school students as participants. In subsequent editions, participation requirements were revised so that applicants must be at least 18 years old and submit a written article on Islam Nusantara. The pesantren provides *takjil* (food for breaking the fast) as well as basic food supplies, including rice, cooking oil, salted fish, mineral water, chilies, tomatoes, garlic, shallots, shrimp paste, salt, and cooking utensils. Other personal necessities, such as coffee, cigarettes, tea, sugar, toiletries, sarongs, prayer garments, and other items typically used by santri are to be provided independently by participants. To ensure effective learning and interaction, the number of participants is limited to approximately 20 individuals.

3.4. Pramistara Material

The following are the thematic materials addressed in the Pramistara program:

3.4.1. Pramistara 2015

The series of activities of the Ramadan Islamic Boarding School (*Pramistara*) was conducted from June 18 to June 21, 2015. On the first day, June 18, the program discussed the themes *Religions of the Archipelago and the Islamization of the Nusantara* as well as the *Sharia Foundations of Indonesian Islamic Art and Culture*. The second day, June 19, focused on *Islamic Sociology and Pesantren within the Framework of National History*. On June 20, the sessions addressed *Indonesian Islamic Science, Religious Preaching and Positive Law*, and *Sufism: Exploring the Inner Meanings of Fasting*. The final day, June 21, examined *Environmental Degradation as a Global Phenomenon*.

Islamic Teachings, and *Indonesian Islamic Studies*. The event featured several speakers, including Agus Sunyoto, Drs., M.Pd.; Prof. Dr. H. Imron Arifin, M.Pd.; Dr. H. Rudianto, M.A.; KH. Dhiyauddin Qushwandiy, Ph.D.; Dr. H. Prijo Djatmiko, S.H., M.H.; and HB Habibi Subandi, S.Sos., M.A.

3.4.2. Pramistara 2016

The theme of the program was *The Study of Nusantara Islam: Strengthening the Values of Ahluussunnah wal Jama'ah an-Nadhliyah*. The activity was held at the Global Tarbiyatul Arifin Islamic Boarding School Foundation in Malang from June 10 to June 12, 2016. The materials presented included *Religion and Islam in the Nusantara, Pesantren in the Historical Trajectory of the Archipelago, Nusantara Islamic Science, and Nusantara Islamic Studies* delivered by Agus Sunyoto; *The Sharia Foundations of Islamic Art and Culture and Sufism: A Study of Fasting* by Prof. Dr. H. Imron Arifin; *Environmental Degradation as a Global Phenomenon* by Rudianto; *Nusantara Cultural Heritage* by Taufan Handoko Baskoro; *Religions Preaching and Positive Law* by Prijo Djatmiko; *Islamic Sociology* by Habibie Subandi; and *Reading Nusantara Manuscripts* by Didim Ahmad Zainuddin.

3.4.3. Pramistara 2017

Pramistara III was held at the Global Al-Bashir Islamic Boarding School in Blitar from May 25 to May 28, 2017, under the theme *Knowing, Recognizing, Understanding, Accepting, and Practicing Islam Nusantara*. The materials presented covered a wide range of topics, including the *History of the Arrival of Islam in the Archipelago, Islam as the Legacy of the Walisongo, Pancasila as the Foundation of Indonesian Nationalism, the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945) as the Constitutional Basis of the Republic of Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama as a Traditional Pillar of the Indonesian State, Proxy War and Asymmetric Warfare as Precursors to World War III, Islam Nusantara as a Form of Resistance to Globalization, the Threat of Transnational Islam to National Identity, and the Dangers of Agnosticism and Secularization through Religious De-sacralization Programs*. The speakers included Agus Sunyoto, KH. M. Dhiyauddin Qushwandy, Prof. Dr. H. Imron Arifin, H. Rudiyanto, M.A., H. Prijo Djatmiko, M.H., Nurbaedah, M.H., M.A., Hendrajit, M.A., Masruhin, M.Hum., and KH. Jadul Maula.

3.4.4. Pramistara 2018

Pramistara 2018 was held at the Global Tarbiyatul Arifin Islamic Boarding School from May 17 to May 20, 2018. The materials discussed included *The History of Emic Islam Nusantara* by Agus Sunyoto; *Islamic Intellectual and Cultural Heritage of the Walisongo* by Prof. Dr. KH. Imron Arifin; *The 1945 Constitution as the Constitutional Foundation of the Republic of Indonesia and Issues in Its Implementation* by Dr. H. Rudianto, M.A.; *Pancasila as the Philosophical Foundation of the Indonesian Nation and State* by KH. Jadul Maula; *The Problem of Dehumanization as an Impact of Globalization* by Tuan Guru Hasan Basri Marwah; *Post-Hegemonic Thought in the Millennial Era* by Agus Sunyoto and Izzulfikri Muhammad; *Blockchain and Cryptocurrency as Applied Sciences in the Millennial Era* by Eko Ahmadi and Izzulfikri Muhammad; *The Phenomenon of Science, Technology, and Culture in the Millennial Era* by KH. Abdullah Wong and R. Donny Sastro Wibowo; *Islam Nusantara as a Form of Resistance to Globalization* by Ki Ardhi Purboanto and Fathul H. Pantrapaja; *Proxy War: A New Chapter of Asymmetric Warfare in the Millennial Era* by Lodgune Nurhadi and Habibie Subandi; and *Saptawikrama: NU's Cultural Strategy in the Millennial Era* by Sastro Adi and Didin Zainuddin.



Figure 1. Pramistara 2018. Documentation by Zainul Arifin



Figure 2. Pramistara 2019 Poster

3.4.5. Pramistara 2019

The theme of Pramistara 2019 was *Rooting Islam Nusantara*, reflecting a commitment to strengthening the values of Islam Nusantara an-Nahdhiyah and to grounding the spirit of *Sattawikrama* in the millennial era. The program was held at the Tarbiyatul Arifin Islamic Boarding School in Malang. The materials discussed encompassed a broad range of topics, including *the Ethnohistorical Study of the Nusantara Peoples, the History of the Introduction of Islam in the Archipelago, Pancasila as the Root of Indonesian Nationalism, the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945) as the Constitutional Foundation of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), Nahdlatul Ulama as a Principal Pillar Supporting the NKRI, Globalization as a Form of Twenty-First-Century Neo-Imperialism, Understanding Proxy War and Asymmetric Warfare, Islam Nusantara in Response to Globalization, Sattawikrama as NU's Cultural Strategy, Transnational Islam as an Instrument of Global Imperialism, the Revival of Paganism and Agnosticism, and the Inevitability of Disruption in the Millennial Era.*



Figure 3. Pramistara 2021 Poster

The speakers included Agus Sunyoto; KH. Dhiyauddin Qushwandy; Prof. Dr. H. Imron Arifin, M.Pd.; Dr. H. Prijo Diatmiko, S.H., M.H.; KH. Abdullah Wong; Dr. H. Rudianto, M.A.; KH. Jadul Maula; Izzulfikri Muhammad; Tuan Guru Hasan Basri; Sastro Adi; Donny Satriyowibowo; Dr. Irfan Basri; Eko Ahmadi; and Didin Zainuddin.

3.4.6. Pramistara 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread to 231 countries worldwide, exerting profound impacts on public health and various aspects of social life. The term "COVID-19" refers to Coronavirus Disease 2019, first identified following its outbreak in Wuhan, China, in 2019. The disease primarily affects the human respiratory system and has resulted in a significant number of fatalities across numerous countries.

One of the defining characteristics of this virus is its high transmissibility through various modes, including airborne transmission, direct contact, and respiratory droplets released when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or speaks. Consequently, a range of preventive measures has been implemented globally, such as mandatory mask use, physical distancing, restrictions on social interaction, and the avoidance of direct physical contact, including handshakes. In response to these conditions and as a preventive strategy to curb further transmission, activities involving large-scale face-to-face interaction were postponed or suspended. This included the temporary discontinuation of Pramistara activities, undertaken to ensure the safety of all participants.

3.4.7. Pramistara 2021

In 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect Indonesia, the sixth Pramistara program was conducted online via Zoom over three days, from April 12 to April 14, 2021. The sessions addressed a wide range of themes, including *National Education in the Twenty-First Century* by Prof. Dr. H. Imron Arifin, M.Pd.; *Civil Law within the Framework of Indonesian Positive Law* by Dr. H. Prijo Diatmiko, S.H., M.H.; *The Trajectory of Global Neo-Imperialism in Indonesian History* by KH. Agus Sunyoto, M.Pd.; *Challenges of Nationalism in the Twenty-First Century* by KH. Abdullah Wong; *Pancasila as the Ideology of the Indonesian Nation and State in the Twenty-First Century* by Dr. H.

Rudianto, M.A.; *Aswaja an-Nadhliyah (Ke-NU-an)* by KH. Jadul Maula; *Hydropolitics and Hydrostrategy in the Twenty-First Century* by Gus Izzulfikri Muhammad; *The Phenomenon of Cyber Warfare in the Twenty-First Century* by Gus Saviq Ali; *Geopolitics and Geostrategy in the Twenty-First Century* by Dr. Irfan Basri; *Proxy and Asymmetric Warfare in the Twenty-First Century* by Tuan Guru Hasan Basri; *Strengthening the Art of Islamic Tradition in the Archipelago* by Gus Sastro Adi; and *Film as a Strategic Instrument in Cyber Warfare in the Twenty-First Century* by Agustya Herdwianto and Daniel Rudy Harianto.

Pramistara 2021 was the final edition of the program conducted by Agus Sunyoto before his passing. Agus Sunyoto noted that the concept of an "open global society," as introduced by George Soros, reflects a new paradigm in global capitalist thought. This concept envisions a society without barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, or region, in which human rights are formally protected under national laws. According to Agus, this idea represents a contemporary manifestation of Adam Smith's principles of free-market capitalism, in which individuals are encouraged to pursue personal gain and wealth accumulation as a means of achieving business success and contributing to societal prosperity.

Agus also emphasized that globalization has ushered in an era of global liberalization, which has transformed traditional concepts such as nationalism, national borders, national identity, and local communities. This transformation has expanded individual freedoms, facilitated by advances in information technology. In the Indonesian context, Agus referred to Hasyim Wahid's analysis in his book *The Twist of Global Capitalism in the History of Indonesian Nationalism (1999)*, in which Hasyim argued that global capitalism employed a neo-imperialist strategy in Indonesia, particularly through the 1988 October Package (Pakto 88) policy. This policy enabled state-owned enterprises and national private companies to secure foreign loans backed by government commercial paper (Alimina, 2017).

3.5. The Impact of Pramistara

Pramistara (Pesantren Ramadan Islam Nusantara) represents a strategic educational initiative designed to strengthen students' understanding of Nusantara Islam, geopolitics, and contemporary global challenges. By combining classical pesantren traditions with critical engagement in modern issues, Pramistara produces multidimensional impacts on its participants. These effects extend beyond the acquisition of religious knowledge to include the cultivation of critical thinking, moderate religious attitudes, and proactive socio-cultural engagement. In this way, Pramistara functions not merely as a forum for religious learning, but as a formative educational space that shapes students' epistemological frameworks and social consciousness.

From the perspective of Michel Foucault's theory of power-knowledge, Pramistara can be understood as a site of alternative knowledge production that challenges dominant historical and religious narratives. The program exposes participants to Nusantara Islamic history through primary sources, local manuscripts, and contextually grounded narratives that are often absent from formal education. Knowledge in Pramistara is not presented as fixed or authoritative, but as a discursive construction that must be critically examined within its socio-historical context. This approach allows participants to recognize how

historical narratives are shaped by power relations and how local Islamic traditions have been marginalized within hegemonic historiography.

The impact of this pedagogical approach can be observed in the trajectory of Pramistara alumni, one of whom is Diaz Nawaksara (Didin Ahmad Zainuddin), a participant of Pramistara 2015. Diaz has continued Agus Sunyoto's intellectual legacy in the fields of history, culture, and Islam through his work as a codicologist, manuscript curator, and activist for Nusantara scripts. Born in Bandung in 1990, Diaz developed a strong interest in Nusantara manuscripts despite his background in information technology education. His engagement with various scripts such as Pallapa, Kawi, Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, Batak, and Lampung reflects the internalization of Pramistara's epistemological framework, which emphasizes the importance of local sources in reconstructing Islamic history.

Diaz's engagement with Agus Sunyoto's works, particularly *Walisongo* and *Atlas Walisongo*, played a crucial role in shaping his intellectual orientation. He emphasized Agus Sunyoto's distinctive method of presenting historical narratives through explicit citation of sources, contextual explanations, and the inclusion of original Javanese texts. This approach resonated deeply with Diaz's linguistic interests and later influenced his own scholarly practices. His participation in Pramistara provided not only intellectual reinforcement but also direct mentorship, enabling him to apply Agus Sunyoto's integrative approach that combines rational inquiry and spiritual sensitivity in historical research (Wawancara Didin Ahmad Zainuddin, 2024).

Using Paulo Freire's framework of critical pedagogy, Diaz's experience illustrates the process of *conscientization*, in which learners move from passive reception of knowledge to critical awareness and transformative action. Through Pramistara, Diaz not only acquired historical knowledge but also developed a reflective understanding of knowledge as a tool for cultural empowerment. His continued involvement in Village History Study activities, both alongside Agus Sunyoto and independently after his passing, demonstrates the translation of critical reflection into concrete social praxis. Moreover, the methodological emphasis on spiritual refinement alongside empirical research exemplifies a distinctive pedagogical synthesis that characterizes Pramistara's educational philosophy.

A similar pattern of impact can be observed in the experience of Rizka Bintang Agus Satriya (Arya), a student at INSUD (Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School) Lamongan and an active member of BEM INSUD and LEGIAN (Institute for Arts, Culture, and Islamic Studies) Lamongan. Arya's engagement with Agus Sunyoto's works, such as *Atlas Walisongo* and *Pu Gajah Mada*, provided her with access to historical perspectives often absent from formal schooling. Her participation in Pramistara 2 Lamongan in 2021 offered a learning experience that emphasized the contextual roots of Islam Nusantara, particularly through materials such as *Taking the Roots of Nusantara Islam in the Land of Gajah Mada*.

From a Freirean perspective, Arya's learning experience exemplifies dialogical education, in which knowledge emerges through interaction, reflection, and lived experience. The benefits she gained, including expanded historical understanding and strengthened intellectual networks, demonstrate how Pramistara fosters collaborative learning communities rather than hierarchical, teacher-centered instruction. Her subsequent roles as Chair of Pramistara 4 Lamongan and Chair of LEGIAN Lamongan for the 2023-2025 period reflect the development of leadership grounded in ethical commitment rather than



Figure 4. LEGIAN Lamongan Activity Poster

solely in institutional authority (Wawancara Rizka Bintang Agus Satriya, 2024).

In Foucaultian terms, Arya's post-Pramistara activities illustrate how individuals shaped within an alternative discursive space can reproduce and disseminate counter-discourses at the community level. Programs such as Friday Night Legi Studies, which include discussions on *Macapat*, *Layang Anbiya'* by *Sunan Drajat*, and other historical and cultural themes, as well as the Sobo Deso initiative aimed at uncovering local histories in Lamongan and Gresik, represent concrete practices of grassroots knowledge production. These initiatives challenge centralized historical narratives by foregrounding local voices and cultural memory.

Although this study highlights the experiences of two Pramistara participants, these narratives are not intended as isolated biographical accounts, but as qualitative empirical evidence illustrating broader educational patterns. The findings will be further supported by quantitative analysis in subsequent sections, allowing for triangulation between narrative depth and statistical representation. Therefore, the impact of Pramistara should be understood not merely in terms of individual success stories, but as an educational model that systematically cultivates critical awareness, historical consciousness, and socially engaged Muslim subjects.

Overall, the Pramistara program represents a significant contribution to Islamic Nusantara education by serving as a space for discursive transformation (Foucault, 2002) and the cultivation of critical consciousness (Freire, 2000). By sustaining local Islamic traditions while engaging critically with global realities, Pramistara provides a pedagogical model that is both culturally rooted and intellectually responsive to the challenges of the contemporary world.

4. Conclusions

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Agus Sunyoto's ideas on Islamic education in Indonesia, as implemented through the Pramistara program (Pesantren Ramadan Islam Nusantara), represent the actualization of an educational vision rooted in pesantren traditions and local cultural values while remaining responsive to global dynamics. Through this program, Agus Sunyoto emphasizes that Islamic education should not function solely as the transmission of religious knowledge, but also as a means of cultivating historical, cultural, and spiritual awareness contextualized within the challenges of the modern era.

The findings indicate that the Pramistara program serves as a meaningful educational space for integrating classical pesantren scholarship with the formation of national character and the development of critical thinking among santri. Through dialogical and thematic learning approaches, Pramistara provides participants with opportunities to engage with contemporary issues, such as geopolitics, globalization, and digital technology, while remaining grounded in the moderate and inclusive values of Nusantara Islam. In this sense, Pramistara can be understood not merely as a religious learning forum, but as an educational model that fosters social awareness and promotes religiously informed nationalism.

From a theoretical perspective, Pramistara embodies a practical implementation of Islamic education that synthesizes rational ('aqliyyah) and spiritual (qalbiyyah) dimensions while simultaneously actualizing Sufi values within social life. This synthesis positions education as a process of cultural cultivation and civilizational formation, rather than merely the transmission of religious doctrines. Agus Sunyoto's educational approach thus contributes to a broader understanding of Islamic pedagogy as a transformative and value-based practice.

However, this study acknowledges certain limitations. The qualitative findings are primarily derived from a limited number of informants and are not intended to represent the full spectrum of Pramistara participants. Furthermore, the study does not employ standardized evaluation instruments, nor does it implement systematic triangulation across multiple data sources. Therefore, the conclusions should be understood as analytically indicative rather than statistically generalizable.

Despite these limitations, the study highlights Pramistara as a distinctive model of Islamic education rooted in the Indonesian archipelago, remaining highly relevant to the needs of younger generations in an era of disruption. The program affirms the role of pesantren as centers for the cultivation of knowledge, values, and national character while maintaining continuity between tradition and modernity. In this regard, Agus Sunyoto's ideas make a significant contribution to the discourse on Nusantara Islam, particularly in addressing the challenges of globalization through an educational strategy grounded in cultural, spiritual, and ethical values.

5. Acknowledgement

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Agus Sunyoto's family for kindly granting their time for interviews and warmly supporting this research, as well as to Gus Zulfikar and Ning Nissa. Appreciation is also extended to the other informants,

including Mr. Didin Ahmad Zainuddin, Mr. Zainal Asrori, Mas Arya, and Mas Rizky, for their valuable contributions.

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