



## RELIGIOUS MODERATION AS PARADIGM FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION AT PONDOK PESANTREN AL-IKHLAS ADDARY DDI TAKKALASI, BARRU

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### Abstract

This study explores the implementation of religious moderation as a paradigm for developing Islamic education at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlas Addary DDI Takkalasi, Barru Regency. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research involved kyai, teachers, and students through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that values of moderation—such as balance (tawazun), tolerance (tasamuh), justice (ta'adul), and proportionality (i'tidal)—are systematically integrated into the curriculum, institutional culture, and character formation. The pesantren applies a reflective-dialogical learning model in which teachers guide students to interpret Islamic teachings contextually within social realities. The kyai's moral example functions as a "hidden curriculum" that strengthens students' moral awareness and social responsibility. Moreover, the pesantren's inclusive culture fosters solidarity and empathy among students of diverse backgrounds. Religious moderation has thus evolved from a normative concept into an educational paradigm guiding curriculum design, institutional management, and character education. This paradigm reflects a holistic and integrative model of Islamic education that harmonizes spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions. It not only preserves Islamic tradition but also responds to contemporary challenges of pluralism, nationalism, and modernization. The study concludes that religious moderation serves as a constructive paradigm for developing a reflective, humanistic, and civilized generation in Islamic boarding schools.

**Keyword:** Islamic Educaton, Pesantren Paradigm, Religious Moderaton, DDI Takkalasi

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## INTRODUCTION

## مقدمة

Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping individuals with strong character, faith, and social competence to live harmoniously in diversity. In the context of Indonesia's plural society religiously, ethnically, and culturally serious challenges have emerged, such as the rise of intolerance, religious exclusivism, and radical tendencies that threaten social cohesion and national values (Nur Khasanah M., & Aravik, H., 2023). Recent studies also affirm that the practice of religious moderation has become a central focus of Islamic education research in Indonesia, particularly in efforts to reduce the potential for extremism and strengthen social tolerance (Hamid, 2025). In response to these challenges, the concept of religious moderation which emphasizes balance, tolerance, and the middle path (wasatīyyah) has become increasingly relevant to be integrated into the Islamic education system (Ayyubi Muhaemin, A., & Martini, N., 2024). Conceptually, religious moderation reflects a religious understanding and practice that rejects extremism, upholds humanitarian values, and acknowledges diversity as a social reality

that must be respected (Damopolii Umar, M., Alqadri Burga, M., & Awal, M., 2023). In the context of Islamic education, several studies indicate that religious moderation encompasses four main pillars: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and cultural accommodation (Yusuf, 2024). This approach emphasizes that moderation is not merely an ideological stance, but a social competence that can be developed through education (Maulana, 2024).

Within Islamic education, values of moderation cannot merely be added as supplementary content; rather, they must serve as the foundation for thinking and acting among all educational components from curriculum design and institutional culture to learning practices (Rahmadi & Hamdan, A., 2023). Various studies indicate that strengthening religious moderation in Islamic educational institutions positively contributes to fostering tolerant character, reinforcing national commitment, and reducing radicalization potential (Imamah, 2023). Thus, Islamic education functions not only as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge but also as a vehicle for cultivating open-minded, moral, and pluralistic individuals.

As the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, pesantren holds a strategic position in realizing moderation-oriented education. Through its boarding system, the tradition of classical text learning, and strong social habituation, pesantren serve as fertile ground for the internalization of wasathiyah values in practice (Suryadi & Sumiyati, S., 2017). However, the transformation toward moderate education is not an easy process. Some pesantren face dilemmas between maintaining orthodox traditions and adapting to modernity, including integrating national values, interreligious tolerance, and respect for local culture without losing Islamic identity (Rozi Jinan, M., & Nurani, S., 2025). The tension between tradition and modernity calls for a new paradigm in developing Islamic education one that not only preserves the authenticity of teachings but also responds to contemporary social dynamics.

Based on these considerations, research on the implementation of religious moderation as a paradigm for developing Islamic education becomes essential. Previous studies have mostly examined religious moderation from theological discourse, government policy, or formal education perspectives. However, few have comprehensively analyzed how religious moderation functions as a paradigm shaping the entire Islamic education system including curriculum, institutional culture, and character formation (Sari Darlis, D., Silaen, R., Ramadayanti, T., & Tanjung, R., 2023). A moderation-based Islamic education paradigm requires an in-depth understanding of how the values of balance, tolerance, and justice can be translated into concrete and sustainable educational strategies.

Accordingly, this research aims to answer two main questions: (1) How are the values of religious moderation implemented in pesantren educational activities? and (2) How do these values function as a paradigm for developing Islamic education? These questions form the basis for analyzing the extent to which religious moderation operates not merely as an ideological slogan but as a value system guiding all educational practices.

This study focuses on Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlas Addary DDI Takkalasi, Barru Regency, one of the Islamic institutions known for consistently integrating moderation values into both curriculum and student life. The pesantren adopts an educational model that unites classical Islamic scholarship with inclusivity and nationalism. The values of balance (*tawazun*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), and justice (*ta'adul*) are not merely normative doctrines but are manifested in daily behavior, social interaction, and institutional policy-making. Therefore, this pesantren provides a relevant context to understand the practical embodiment of religious moderation as an Islamic educational paradigm.

Practically, the results of this research are expected to contribute significantly to Islamic educational institutions, especially pesantren, in constructing an educational system grounded in the values of balance, tolerance, and respect for diversity. In a pluralistic society, pesantren play a crucial role as social agents that not only produce religious scholars but also nurture individuals with inclusive character and adaptability to change. The integration of moderation values in education is expected to foster a generation that is rational, socially minded, and oriented toward the common good.

Theoretically, this study enriches the body of Islamic educational knowledge by offering a new perspective on religious moderation as an integrative and contextual educational paradigm. This paradigm combines cognitive, affective, and social dimensions in balance and positions learners as active subjects in value formation. Thus, Islamic education is not limited to the transmission of religious texts but becomes a medium for developing moral and humanitarian consciousness. Such an educational model aligns with John Dewey's concept of reflective education, which emphasizes experience-based learning and social meaning-making of religious values (Dewey, 1916).

Islamic education grounded in religious moderation is also expected to address globalization challenges that often trigger identity and value conflicts. Through a moderate approach, Islamic education can present the face of religion that is peaceful, inclusive, and humanistic. Moderation provides a conceptual framework for learners to understand differences without hostility and to uphold truth without violence. In this context, pesantren serve as social laboratories that cultivate the universal virtues of Islam justice, compassion, and balance.

Therefore, this introduction affirms that integrating moderation values into Islamic education is an urgent necessity as well as a conceptual solution for strengthening national character. Religious moderation is not merely an ideological strategy but an educational paradigm that bridges spirituality and humanity, knowledge and morality, as well as tradition and modernity. This research seeks to reaffirm moderation as an Islamic educational paradigm that unites religious values with universal human ideals to realize a peaceful, just, and civilized society.

## METHOD

## منهج

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to understand lived experiences and the meanings behind the implementation of religious moderation values in the educational process at Al-Ikhlâs Addary DDI Takkalasi Islamic Boarding School, Barru Regency. This approach enables the researcher to explore the subjective experiences of educational actors and interpret the meanings they construct within the pesantren's social context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenological design was chosen because it focuses on understanding the essence of human experience rather than merely describing behavior, making it relevant to the research objective of interpreting the practice of moderate Islamic education in depth (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The research site was determined purposively, considering that this pesantren is known for actively integrating moderation values into both the curriculum and the daily lives of students. The informants consisted of one foundation leader, one curriculum developer, two principals of Madrasah Aliyah and Tsanawiyah, and six teachers. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling until data saturation was reached (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

The fieldwork was conducted over two months, from May to June. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, allowing for a

comprehensive understanding of how moderation values are implemented in daily educational practices (Yin, 2018). Data analysis was conducted interactively through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, as proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

To ensure the validity of the findings, source triangulation and technique triangulation were applied, along with member checking as a form of data verification (Denzin, 2012). Research reliability was maintained through the application of dependability and confirmability principles, while research ethics were upheld by ensuring the confidentiality of informants' identities and obtaining informed consent for voluntary participation (Resnik, 2018).

Furthermore, the analysis of the findings was connected with John Dewey's theory of reflective education, Grant Wiggins's concept of authentic assessment, and Emile Durkheim's notion of social integration to strengthen the interpretation of religious moderation as a reflective, humanistic, and contextual paradigm of Islamic education. A similar approach has also been employed in several systematic studies on the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic educational institutions, emphasizing phenomenological and case study approaches to understand moderation practices within their contexts (Rahmawati, 2023).

## RESULT | نتائج

### Implementation of Religious Moderation in Educational Activities at the Pesantren

The findings indicate that the values of religious moderation have become an integral part of the educational system at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlās Addary DDI Takkalasi. The values of *tawazun* (balance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ta'adul* (justice), and *i'tidal* (proportionality) are not only taught as moral theories but are also concretely implemented in the curriculum, social life, and institutional traditions of the pesantren. This integration makes education in the pesantren function as a holistic process for shaping moderate character. These results are consistent with the findings of *Wasatiyyah Islam in the Framework of Pesantren Education Tradition* (2018), which emphasize that the pesantren educational tradition has historically been rooted in the values of balance (*tawazun*) and tolerance (*tasamuh*) (Hasan, 2023).

In terms of curriculum, the pesantren adopts a learning system that integrates classical Islamic education (*tafaqquh fiddin*) with general education that is contextual to modern social realities. Students (*santri*) not only study classical texts (*kitab kuning*) and religious sciences but also engage with contemporary issues such as nationalism, pluralism, and social justice. This approach fosters the awareness that religious values should serve as a moral compass in managing life within a diverse and dynamic society.

During the teaching and learning process, the *kyai* and teachers employ reflective-dialogical methods. Students are not treated as passive recipients of knowledge but are encouraged to discuss and think critically about the meaning of Islamic teachings within their social context. This approach nurtures a moderate way of thinking neither extreme in textual interpretation nor overly liberal in understanding meaning. Such a model aligns with the concept of reflective education, which places social experience as a meaningful source of learning.

The moral example of the *kyai* emerges as the most dominant factor in the internalization of moderation values. The *kyai* act as moral and spiritual figures for the entire pesantren community. Their simple, open-minded, and fair attitudes serve as direct lessons for students to practice the values of balance and tolerance in daily life. Furthermore, social practices in the

pesantren such as communal prayers, gotong royong (mutual cooperation), and collective deliberation serve as effective means of cultivating a sense of solidarity and social responsibility.

The institutional culture of the pesantren also plays a major role in nurturing moderate attitudes. Principles of togetherness, discipline, and mutual respect are consistently applied in the students' daily life. There is no discrimination based on regional origin, family background, or organizational affiliation. All students are treated equally as members of a learning community with shared moral responsibility. This lifestyle strengthens social solidarity and cultivates a tolerant culture consistent with wasathiyah values.

Overall, the implementation of religious moderation at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Addary DDI Takkalasi operates through three main channels: (1) formal learning that emphasizes the integration of religious and social knowledge, (2) the moral example of kyai and teachers as ethical role models, and (3) social habituation that instills values of togetherness and responsibility.

These three elements form a unified Islamic educational system that is reflective, humanistic, and rooted in moderate Islamic values.

### **Religious Moderation as a Paradigm for the Development of Islamic Education**

Further findings reveal that the values of religious moderation at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Addary DDI Takkalasi are not only implemented in educational activities but have also evolved into a paradigm that underpins the institution's overall direction and policy. This paradigm inspires curriculum development, institutional systems, and character formation, making moderation a conceptual framework for Islamic educational development.

At the curriculum level, the moderation paradigm is realized through an integrative approach that combines cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. Students not only comprehend Islamic values intellectually but are also encouraged to internalize and apply them in their social lives. Learning is directed toward developing awareness that religion has relevance to humanitarian issues such as social justice, peace, and solidarity. Thus, the curriculum is not doctrinal but contextual and applicable.

The institutional culture of the pesantren reinforces this paradigm through inclusive and participatory management. Every institutional decision is made through musyawarah (deliberation) that respects differences of opinion. The leadership structure promotes justice, openness, and accountability. These values form the foundation for developing an Islamic education system that remains faithful to its Islamic identity while being adaptive to social change.

In student character formation, the pesantren adopts experiential learning and social reflection models. Students are trained to develop moral sensitivity and social empathy through various activities such as community service, dakwah sosial (social preaching), and religious mentoring in surrounding communities. Each activity concludes with collective reflection sessions that foster spiritual understanding of their social experiences. This process cultivates morally upright, open-minded, and responsible individuals.

This moderation-based educational paradigm reflects the principle of holistic education an education that develops all dimensions of the human personality: spiritual, intellectual, social, and moral, in an integrated manner. DDI Takkalasi pesantren has successfully built an educational system that harmonizes classical Islamic scholarship with universal human values. Through this

approach, the pesantren not only produces religious scholars but also nurtures civilized individuals ready to contribute to a plural society.

Therefore, the research findings indicate that religious moderation has functioned as a paradigm for developing Islamic education at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs Addary DDI Takkalasi. This paradigm serves not only as a conceptual foundation but also as a practical orientation guiding the entire educational process toward a balance between faith, knowledge, and action. By integrating moderation values into every educational aspect, this pesantren successfully presents an image of Islam that is peaceful, adaptive, and oriented toward the common good.

**Table 1.** Integration of Moderation Values in the Educational System of Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs Addary DDI Takkalasi

No	Educational Aspect	Form of Implementation	Internalized Moderation Values	Impact on Students
1	Curriculum	Integration of religious and general sciences; learning classical Islamic texts ( <i>kitab kuning</i> ) accompanied by discussions on contemporary social issues	<i>Tawazun</i> (balance), <i>ta'adul</i> (justice)	Students understand the relevance of Islamic teachings to modern life and a pluralistic society
2	Learning Process	Reflective-dialogical approach between teachers and students; strengthening critical and contextual thinking	<i>Tasamuh</i> (tolerance), <i>i'tidal</i> (proportionality)	Students develop the ability to interpret Islamic teachings moderately and openly
3	Kyai's Exemplary Role	Demonstrating simplicity, fairness, and openness in guiding students	<i>Uswah hasanah</i> (good example), <i>rahmah</i> (compassion)	Students emulate the <i>kyai's</i> behavior in their daily social and spiritual life
4	Institutional Culture	Decision-making through <i>musyawarah</i> (deliberation); dormitory life based on togetherness and cooperation	<i>Syura</i> (consultation), <i>ukhuwwah</i> (brotherhood)	Development of social solidarity and a tolerant culture among students
5	Character Development	Social activities, <i>dakwah bil hal</i> (preaching through action), and reflection on Islamic values	<i>Maslahah</i> (public benefit), <i>tawazun</i> (balance)	Students grow into moral, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals

## DISCUSSION

## مناقشة

### Religious Moderation as the Implementation of Islamic Educational Values

The findings show that the implementation of religious moderation at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs Addary DDI Takkalasi is not limited to conceptual instruction but has become a tangible practice within the educational system. This demonstrates that *wasathiyah* values have transformed into operational principles shaping both the students' character and the institutional culture. The findings confirm that moderate Islamic education serves as an effective medium for fostering social solidarity and reducing the potential for radicalism within educational institutions.

The integration between religious and social sciences observed in the pesantren reflects an epistemological balance between *naqliyah* (revealed knowledge) and *'aqliyah* (rational knowledge). This approach aligns with the view emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach in Islamic education to build spiritual, intellectual, and social equilibrium (Sari Darlis, D., Silaen, R., Ramadayanti, T., & Tanjung, R., 2023). Thus, the educational practice at DDI Takkalasi demonstrates that Islamic education can function as a medium for reconciling tradition and modernity without losing its Islamic identity.

The *kyai* and teachers act as the primary models in internalizing moderation values. Their exemplary conduct forms a hidden curriculum that is far more influential than formal instruction. This phenomenon reinforces Bandura's social learning theory, which posits that learners acquire

behavior through observation and imitation. In the pesantren context, the values of balance, justice, and empathy are instilled not through lectures alone but through consistent and reflective social interactions. Therefore, the kyai's example serves as the most effective medium for instilling moderate character among students.

Moreover, the pesantren's social environment illustrates the educational function as a medium for fostering moral solidarity. This observation corresponds with Emile Durkheim's social integration theory, which asserts that education plays a crucial role in constructing collective consciousness and social cohesion (Durkheim, 1951). DDI Takkalasi demonstrates how routine activities such as congregational prayers, deliberations, and community service serve not only religious purposes but also strengthen communal identity and social responsibility among students.

### **The Moderation Paradigm as a Framework for the Development of Islamic Education**

The findings also reveal that religious moderation at DDI Takkalasi has evolved into a comprehensive paradigm of Islamic education. This paradigm extends beyond social ethics to serve as a philosophical foundation for curriculum design, institutional management, and character formation. In this sense, religious moderation functions as a worldview that guides the entire teaching and learning process within Islamic education.

The moderation paradigm asserts that Islamic education must be reflective and contextual. Students are not merely expected to memorize religious texts but are guided to interpret their meanings in social and human contexts. This approach aligns with John Dewey's theory of reflective education, which emphasizes the importance of linking learning experiences with real-life situations (Dewey, 1916). At DDI Takkalasi, this reflective approach is evident in teachers' practices of engaging students in dialogues on the meaning of Qur'anic verses and Hadith within the context of humanity and nationhood.

At the institutional level, the moderation paradigm demonstrates that pesantren not only preserve religious traditions but also exhibit adaptive flexibility toward social change. The inclusive, participatory, and fair institutional culture reflects the application of *syura* (deliberation) and *ta'adul* (justice) in educational management. This reflects the relevance of participatory management theory in the context of Islamic education, where the involvement of all institutional members in decision-making processes fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for upholding moderation values.

In character development, the moderation paradigm is operationalized through an experiential learning approach. Students are trained to experience religious values in social practice and reflect upon them to discover the spiritual meaning behind their actions. This model reinforces the concept of authentic learning, which evaluates educational success not solely by academic achievement but by moral and social maturity (Wiggins, 1999). Within the pesantren context, such learning turns Islamic education into a process of character formation rather than mere knowledge transmission.

The moderate Islamic education paradigm in this pesantren also serves as a bridge between two major currents of Islamic education conservatism and modernism. DDI Takkalasi maintains the authority of classical scholarship while simultaneously embracing openness toward science, culture, and universal human values. This model supports the findings of Ismail et al. (2021), which describe religious moderation as a creative synthesis between *turath* (Islamic intellectual heritage) and *tajdid* (renewal). Hence, this paradigm represents not only a strategy of adaptation

but also an epistemological evolution of Islamic education in the modern era.

### Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the findings expand the understanding of religious moderation as an epistemological framework within Islamic education. Wasathiyah values are not merely moral principles but methodological foundations that guide thought, behavior, and interaction in the educational process. This paradigm aligns with the socio-constructivist approach (Vygotsky, 1978), which holds that the formation of values and meaning occurs through social interaction. DDI Takkalasi stands as a concrete example of how Islamic educational institutions construct religious meaning through dialogue rather than unilateral indoctrination.

Practically, this study demonstrates that moderation-based Islamic education can produce a learning model oriented toward both spiritual and social equilibrium. Pesantren can serve as agents of cultural reconciliation (Rozi Jinan, M., & Nurani, S., 2025), social spaces that harmonize religious, cultural, and national values. This implication is significant for national education policy, particularly in strengthening character education and developing social competence within Islamic educational institutions.

In conclusion, the discussion affirms that religious moderation at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs Addary DDI Takkalasi is not merely a product of local innovation but represents a distinctive paradigm of Indonesian Islamic education rooted in scholarly tradition, oriented toward social good, and open to universal human dialogue.

## CONCLUSION | خاتمة

This study affirms that religious moderation is not merely a normative concept but has transformed into a paradigm for developing Islamic education that is integrated into all aspects of pesantren life. Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs Addary DDI Takkalasi has successfully incorporated moderation values -such as balance, tolerance, justice, and humanity- into its curriculum system, institutional culture, and student character formation. The internalization of these values occurs through the kyai's exemplary conduct, social habituation, and reflective learning processes.

The paradigm of Islamic education based on religious moderation has proven effective in shaping students who are reflective thinkers, socially ethical, and oriented toward the common good (maslahah). Thus, Islamic education in pesantren functions not only as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge but also as a process for nurturing moral and humanitarian awareness in line with national principles and universal Islamic values. This model may serve as a reference for developing a moderate Islamic education that remains adaptive to contemporary changes while deeply rooted in the intellectual traditions of Islam.

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