

The Integrative Construction Model: A Strategic Management Approach to Religious Moderation in Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia, as a country with religious and cultural diversity, faces serious challenges in the form of the growth of radicalism, which has the potential to disrupt social cohesion. An Islamic education management strategy is needed to foster religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools. This study aims to develop a model for managing religious moderation among Islamic boarding school students in Indonesia, emphasizing the role of Islamic boarding schools as strategic Islamic educational institutions. The research was conducted at four selected Islamic boarding schools: SPEAM Pasuruan, Ma'had Dalwa, Pesantren At-Taqwa, and Dayah Darul Abrar. Primary data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, while secondary data were sourced from relevant literature. The data were then analyzed using triangulation, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show three main findings: first, ustadz/ustadzah have an integrated perspective on religious moderation by emphasizing national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture; second, religious moderation is fostered through an integrative managerial approach in planning, organizing, implementing intracurricular and extracurricular activities, and enforcing pesantren rules; third, the resulting fosterage model is an integrated construct that integrates the dimensions of values, curriculum, student activities, and institutional governance. In conclusion, this study confirms that pesantren management grounded in an integrated perspective and an integrative construction model provides a strategic framework for institutionalizing religious moderation among students. Beyond its contribution to Islamic education management, this model offers transferable insights for religious and faith-based educational institutions worldwide, particularly in pluralistic societies confronting radicalization, intolerance, and social fragmentation.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-populated nation, presents a complex multicultural landscape where religious expressions range from traditionalist to modernist orientations, all operating within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Mahdayeni et al., 2019; Rohmadi et al., 2024; Sagira et al., 2024). While this plurality constitutes a significant social asset, it simultaneously poses existential challenges; instances of religious exclusivism, hate speech, and radical attitudes continue to threaten social harmony and interfaith relations (Alazeez et al., 2024; Ilham & Ramadani, 2024; Wonuola et al., 2025; Zakiah et al., 2025). Historically, the Indonesian government relied on the coercive suppression of radical groups during the New Order era (Voll & Sudrajat, 1997). However, the post-reform socio-political climate has created an expansive space for radical ideologies to flourish, with various mass organizations openly voicing opposition to Pancasila and advocating for alternative systems such as Sharia law or the caliphate (Hilmy, 2015; Junaedi et al., 2024; Kader et al., 2024; Khoir et al., 2024; Ma'arif et al., 2025; Ratnah et al., 2024; Wibowo et al., 2025). This volatile dynamic underscores an urgent need for preventive, educational strategies that prioritize long-term ideological moderation over short-term state coercion (Faidkholidi & Fajri, 2025; Sormin et al., 2025).

The impact of this radicalization has profoundly touched the education sector, where Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have frequently found themselves under scrutiny and, at times, unfairly accused of being conduits for extremist ideologies (Am & Sholihah, 2025; Jainuri, 2016; Margiansyah et al., 2025; Qaraḍāwī et al., 2004; W et al., 2024). Nevertheless, these accusations often overlook the historical reality that *pesantren* have been instrumental in the nation's struggle for independence, the strengthening of nationalism, and the comprehensive character building of Indonesian youth (Arif et al., 2024; Azizah et al., 2025; Happyana et al., 2025; Huda, 2024). Prominent figures have long emphasized that *pesantren* are not merely religious schools but are centers of character education and bastions of the nation's moral defense (Armenia, 2016). This strategic position makes the *pesantren* a crucial locus for examining how religious moderation is conceptualized and implemented to foster a balanced religious understanding that avoids both rigid extremism and excessive liberalism (Purwowododo & Zaini, 2024).

The concept of religious moderation, or *wasathiyah*, has been promoted as the ideal solution to curb radicalism, often operationalized through four key indicators: commitment to nationality, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation of local culture (Mahamid, 2023; Saputri, 2021). The promotion of moderation often faces ideological obstacles from parties that view it as a Western-backed liberalization project (Khaerurrozikin, 2015; Wibowo et al., 2025). Furthermore, some groups actively oppose *wasathiyah* because it supposedly contradicts the principles of monotheism or core Islamic values, potentially fueling anti-Pancasila movements (Amiruddin, 2014; Fikri et al., 2024; Nugroho et al., 2025; Sayaka et al., 2025). Recognizing these challenges, the Indonesian government's initiative to strengthen moderation through *pesantren* is a strategic step, especially given that Law No. 18 of 2019 now grants *pesantren* an equal status with other formal educational institutions, further empowering them to foster moderate orientations (Aziz et al., 2019; Fathurrochman et al., 2019; Hendrayadi & Yunus, 2025; Muhyiddin, 2023).

Historically, *pesantren* served as the primary educational model long before the formal system was established, producing scholars and national heroes who laid the foundations of Indonesian civilization (Akmansyah et al., 2024; Ilahi, 2014; Zakariyah et al., 2022). To investigate whether these values truly flourish today, preliminary interviews were conducted with *ustadz* and *kiyai* at prominent institutions, including *Pesantren* MUDI Mesra (Aceh), *Pesantren* al-Taqla (Bekasi), and Ma'had DALWA (Pasuruan). These initial findings revealed a strong commitment to Pancasila as the final national consensus and a deep-seated culture of tolerance in which differences are respected through

persuasion rather than violence. However, it remains unclear whether these moderate behaviors develop naturally or through a systematic management process, highlighting the need for a clearly formulated, empirically grounded model for developing religious moderation (Burga & Damopolii, 2022; Madkan et al., 2025; Musdalifah et al., 2025; Srinio et al., 2025; Umiarso & Qorib, 2022).

While previous research has highlighted the importance of tolerance in *pesantren* to counter radicalism (Gustari et al., 2021; Mahfudi & Rifa'i, 2025) and examined the diversity of Islamic movements (Rudianto, 2011). Most studies remain focused on the normative curriculum or individual leadership (Saibani, 2019; Yunus & Salim, 2018). Although some studies show the successful integration of moderation in specific *pesantren* through classical texts and extracurricular activities (Firmansyah, 2020; Wulandari, 2020). There is a significant research gap concerning how moderation is sustained through systematic institutional governance. This study addresses this gap by proposing an integrative management-based model for fostering religious moderation, grounded in actual institutional practices from planning and policy formulation to dormitory life and evaluation mechanisms. By moving beyond classroom instruction to view moderation as a holistic organizational practice embedded in the educational ecosystem, this research argues that governance is the key determinant of sustainable moderation. Thus, this study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how *pesantren* can sustainably cultivate moderate religious orientations among their students.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative, multiple-case study design, following the framework proposed by Creswell. This design was selected to facilitate a deep, holistic exploration of how religious moderation is institutionalised within the complex, real-world contexts of Islamic boarding schools. (Creswell, 2019). The research objects comprise four institutions representing diverse typologies: SPEAM Pasuruan (*Modernist-Muhammadiyah*), Dalwa Bangil (*Traditional-Salaf*), At-Taqwa Bekasi (*Urban Integrated*), and Dayah Darul Abrar Aceh Jaya (*Acehnese Dayah tradition*). The key informants comprise 23 individuals, including *pesantren* leaders and senior teachers (*ustadz/ustadzah*), selected through purposive sampling. (Sugiyono, 2013). These informants serve as authoritative data sources, providing comprehensive insights into educational policies, decision-making processes, and the practical implementation of moderation values in students' daily lives. (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Sugiyono, 2013).

The data collection process relies on both primary and secondary sources to ensure depth and empirical richness. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, allowing for a flexible yet focused exploration of the subjects' perspectives. (Arikunto, 2010; Creswell, 2019). Additionally, non-participatory observations were conducted to capture the natural dynamics of classroom learning, dormitory life, and religious activities without researcher intervention. (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Secondary data were collected through documentary studies, including examinations of curricula, internal regulations, activity agendas, and administrative records relevant to student guidance. The integration of these techniques aims to achieve data triangulation, ensuring that the research findings are highly valid and scholarly credible. (Arikunto, 2010; Sugiyono, 2013).

Data were analysed systematically using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. This analytical technique involves three concurrent and iterative stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the reduction stage, raw field data were selected, simplified, and abstracted to identify core patterns related to the management of religious moderation (Saldana, 2014). Subsequently, the data were presented through descriptive narratives and cross-case comparison matrices to facilitate the mapping of *pesantren* typologies (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The final stage involved concluding by verifying the findings against field notes and expert discussions, ultimately producing consistent and accurate

propositions regarding moderation practices across the four institutions studied (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldana, 2014).

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants.

Code	Role	Institution	Institutional Typology	Years of Experience
UZBI	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	>10 years
UVM	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	>10 years
UQZ	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	5–10 years
UHQ	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	>10 years
USZ	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	5–10 years
UFR	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	>10 years
UYSRF	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	>10 years
UMRF	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	5–10 years
URB	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	>10 years
UISN	Teacher	SPEAM Pasuruan	Modernist–Muhammadiyah	5–10 years
UNLH	Teacher	Dalwa Bangil	Traditional–Salaf	>10 years
UAS	Teacher	Dalwa Bangil	Traditional–Salaf	>10 years
UMM	Teacher	Dalwa Bangil	Traditional–Salaf	5–10 years
UAQK	Teacher	At-Taqwa Bekasi	Urban Integrated	>10 years
UKH	Teacher	At-Taqwa Bekasi	Urban Integrated	>10 years
UAN	Teacher	At-Taqwa Bekasi	Urban Integrated	5–10 years
UMN	Teacher	At-Taqwa Bekasi	Urban Integrated	5–10 years
UMR	Teacher	At-Taqwa Bekasi	Urban Integrated	>10 years
UI	Teacher	Dayah Darul Abrar	Acehnese Dayah	>10 years
UM	Teacher	Dayah Darul Abrar	Acehnese Dayah	>10 years
UF	Teacher	Dayah Darul Abrar	Acehnese Dayah	5–10 years
UA	Teacher	Dayah Darul Abrar	Acehnese Dayah	>10 years
UBY	Teacher	Dayah Darul Abrar	Acehnese Dayah	>10 years

Source. Data Collection, 2026.

FINDINGS

Teachers' Integrated Perspective on Religious Moderation

Field observations across the four *pesantren* — SPEAM Pasuruan, Dalwa Bangil, At-Taqwa Bekasi, and Dayah Darul Abrar Aceh Jaya — consistently revealed that *ustadz/ustadzah* do not treat religious moderation as an externally imposed concept but as a lived institutional value. Classroom atmospheres, daily interactions, and institutional signage at all four sites reflected an embedded culture of tolerance, national commitment, and rejection of extremism. Documentary evidence, including lesson notes, curriculum outlines, and internal school regulations, further confirmed that moderation is explicitly referenced as a guiding educational principle.

Interview data triangulate these observations. Teachers across all four institutions converged on three interrelated understandings of religious moderation. First, moderation is understood as the practice of *wasathiyah* — the middle path — in which religious life is conducted without extremism:

"Religious moderation is practising religious teachings in a moderate manner (*wasathiyah*), avoiding extreme attitudes toward religion, and tolerating differences among religions and schools of thought (*mazhab*).\" (UZBI, personal communication, June 2024).

Second, moderation is understood as a deliberate avoidance of religious coercion — a conscious institutional stance against forcing others to conform to a single belief:

"Religious moderation is the avoidance of extreme religious attitudes. This is expressed by choosing the middle path in religion and not forcing others to follow a particular belief." (UFR, personal communication, July 2024).

Third, it is understood as an active ethic of tolerance encompassing respect for diverse religious opinions and openness to *mazhab* differences: "It is an attitude of tolerance... respecting the opinions of other religions, not being rigid, avoiding fanaticism toward a sect, and being open to differences." (UQZ, personal communication, July 2024).

Documentary analysis of teachers' lesson notes and curriculum documents reveals a consistent theological grounding for these perspectives. References to QS. *Al-Baqarah: 143* on the *ummatan wasathan* appear across multiple institutions, functioning as a scriptural anchor for moderation. At Dalwa, classical texts (*kitab kuning*) and the principle of *lakum dinukum wa liya din* are used to demarcate the boundaries of tolerance without compromising *Sharia*-compliant identity: "*Lakum dinukum wa liya din is the boundary of tolerance, so we do not imitate practices contrary to Sharia.*" (UMM, personal communication, August 2024).

At At-Taqwa, curriculum documents emphasise *tasamuh* (tolerance) and justice as urban civic values, while at Darul Abrar, oral transmission in religious study circles merges scriptural learning with Acehnese local wisdom.

What emerges from this triangulation is not merely a definition of moderation but evidence of an integrated institutional perspective — one that bridges classical Islamic scholarship, national civic identity, and local cultural wisdom. Teachers across diverse typologies (modernist, traditionalist, urban, and regional) consistently articulate moderation as a non-negotiable commitment to national unity (NKRI), tolerance across differences, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local culture (*al-'adah al-muhakkamah*). This convergence, validated across observation, interview, and documentation, confirms that the *ustadz/ustadzah* in these institutions serve not only as subject teachers but as primary architects of a moderate institutional culture.

Table 2. Teachers' Integrated Perspectives on Religious Moderation Across Four Pesantren.

Aspect	SPEAM (Pasuruan)	Dalwa (Bangil)	At-Taqwa (Bekasi)	Darul Abrar (Aceh Jaya)
Core Meaning of Moderation	Middle path (<i>wasathiyah</i>), tolerance, avoiding extremism	Balanced Islam grounded in classical teachings	Fairness, openness, and social harmony	Justice, balance, and unity among people
Attitude Toward Differences	Respect for other religions and <i>mazhab</i>	Respect within and across Islamic schools	Acceptance of a plural society	Respect for diversity across communities
View on Extremism	Rejects rigid and coercive religiosity	Emphasises balance and scholarly authority	Rejects narrow interpretations	Emphasises peaceful coexistence
National Orientation	Supports national unity (NKRI)	Loyal to the state framework	Accepts constitutional order	Strong national commitment
Knowledge Sources	Muhammadiyah media, Qur'anic and hadith texts	<i>Kitab Kuning</i> , <i>kyai</i> guidance	Classical texts, urban civic curriculum	Oral study circles, local wisdom

The Integrative Construction Model for Fostering Religious Moderation

Field observations across all four research sites revealed that religious moderation is not fostered through a single programme or dedicated curriculum but through an interlocking system of institutional mechanisms operating simultaneously. Observational records document that moderation values appear in classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, dormitory regulations, and daily conduct enforcement-functioning collectively as what this study identifies as the *Integrative Construction Model*. This convergence was consistent across institutional typologies — whether modernist (SPEAM), traditionalist (Dalwa), urban-integrated (At-Taqwa), or regional-traditional (Darul Abrar)-confirming that the model is not idiosyncratic to one school but reflects a shared governance logic.

Interview data illuminate how each institutional mechanism operates as a deliberate management strategy. In the domain of teaching and learning, moderation values are embedded across multiple subjects—*Pancasila* and Citizenship Education, *Tawhid*, *Fiqh*, and *Akhlaq* — even in the absence of a dedicated standalone curriculum. At SPEAM, this integration extends to the monitoring of student public speeches:

“We consistently teach moderate Islamic teachings in the classroom through lectures, discussions, and practical exercises. We also check the contents of the students’ speeches before they are delivered in public to ensure alignment with moderation principles.” (UVM, interview, July 2024).

At Dalwa, moderation is reinforced through *halaqah* (study circles) where teachers model the ethics of disagreement:

*“When explaining concepts like *lakum dinukum wa liya din*, we remind students not to ridicule those who follow different legal opinions. If corrections must be made, they should be delivered with gentleness and courtesy as part of noble character.”* (UAF, interview, August 2024).

In extracurricular settings, national and religious celebrations function as pedagogical instruments. At Dalwa, Independence Day events are intentionally designed to cultivate patriotism and solidarity:

“During Independence Day celebrations, all members of the community — teachers and students alike — participate in events designed to cultivate patriotism, solidarity, and tolerance. Similar values are fostered through traditional dances and Islamic art performances during the Islamic New Year.” (UAF & UNLH, interview, August 2024).

These activities ranging from *Tapak Suci* martial arts at SPEAM to journalism and theatre at At-Taqwa are not optional enrichment programmes but institutionally mandated laboratories of social negotiation.

The most structurally distinctive feature of the model, however, is the enforcement of institutional regulations, particularly the mixed dormitory placement policy. Documentary evidence from dormitory mapping records at SPEAM and At-Taqwa confirms that students from the same region are deliberately separated:

“Students coming from the same region should not be placed in the same bedroom. They are automatically educated to be moderate because they are taught to respect one another and strengthen bonds of friendship between students of different ethnicities and regions.” (UZBI & UQZ, interview, June/July 2024).

This policy is corroborated by informants at Dalwa:

"The system educates students to socialise and develop a sense of brotherhood, respect, and affection for others... This diversity in the dormitory helps them get along with peers from all parts of the country." (UHM, interview, August 2024).

Beyond dormitory assignment, institutional codes of conduct — covering daily worship, grooming, language use, and social etiquette-function as a comprehensive regulatory framework that transforms moderation from a classroom concept into a habitual daily practice.

Taken together, the triangulated data from observation, interview, and documentation confirm that the Integrative Construction Model operates through the systematic alignment of three institutional pillars: pedagogical instruction, experiential extracurricular activities, and regulatory enforcement. Each pillar reinforces the others, creating an institutional ecosystem in which moderation is neither taught in isolation nor left to individual discretion but is governed as a holistic organisational practice. This model provides a replicable strategic framework for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to institutionalise moderate values through governance rather than curriculum alone.

Observable Outcomes of Religious Moderation among *Santri*

Field observations conducted across the four *pesantren* documented consistent behavioural evidence of moderation internalisation among *santri* beyond the boundaries of formal programmes. Observational logs recorded students engaging respectfully with community members of varying religious and social backgrounds during outreach activities, demonstrating non-exclusivist social conduct. Within the dormitory environment, differences in regional ritual practices and interpretations of Islamic teachings were observed to be managed through dialogue rather than conflict—a pattern noted across all four research sites and consistent with the mixed-dormitory policy documented in Section 3.2.

Interview data provide direct testimony to these outcomes. Teachers across the institutions reported observable changes in student behaviour as evidence of successful moderation internalisation. One informant described the manifestation of moderation as a social ethic during community outreach:

"Our students are trained to practice moderation as social ethics. When they participate in community service, they interact politely with residents regardless of their beliefs or social status, showing no exclusivist attitudes." (USZ, interview, July 2024).

A further dimension of internalisation was reported in the domain of digital conduct. Teachers at SPEAM and At-Taqwa confirmed that students are actively mentored in *tabayyun* (verification) as a form of digital moderation:

"We advise santri to verify every piece of information before sharing it. They must avoid any digital content that could incite hostility or sectarian conflict." (UVM, interview, July 2024).

At At-Taqwa, the dormitory itself was described as a site of outcome validation:

"The dormitory is a laboratory of tolerance. When differences in ritual or interpretation arise, students choose to discuss them under the guidance of teachers rather than letting them become a source of friction." (UAQK, interview, August 2024).

Mentoring records and observational logs reviewed during documentary analysis corroborate these interview accounts, confirming that the behavioural patterns described are not isolated incidents but institutionally recognised outcomes. The convergence of field observation, interview testimony, and documentary evidence confirms that the Integrative Construction Model produces measurable

changes in student conduct — both within the *pesantren* and in the wider social environment. The *santri* emerging from these institutions demonstrate that theological learning, experiential reinforcement, and regulatory discipline, when systematically aligned, produce graduates who embody moderation as a living social ethic rather than an abstract institutional aspiration.

Table 3. Research Note: Summary of Results and Validation Sources.

Research Focus	Key Findings	Triangulation Validation
Teachers' integrated perspective on religious moderation	Ustadz/ustadzah hold a convergent, institutionally embedded perspective on moderation as <i>wasathiyyah</i> , civic commitment, and cultural accommodation — grounded in classical scholarship, kyai guidance, and organisational media	Interviews (UZBI, UFR, UQZ, UMM, UAN); lesson notes; curriculum documents; field observations across four sites
Integrative Construction Model for fostering moderation	Moderation is fostered through three systematically aligned institutional pillars: classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, and enforcement of dormitory and conduct regulations — constituting a governance-based model	Dormitory mapping records; institutional codes of conduct; interviews (UVM, UAF, UZBI, UQZ, UHM, UNLH); observational logs of classroom and extracurricular activities
Observable outcomes of moderation among santri	Santri demonstrate internalised moderation through respectful community interactions, critical digital conduct (<i>tabayyun</i>), and constructive dialogue in the dormitory	Observational logs of student-community interactions; mentoring records; interviews (USZ, UVM, UAQK)

DISCUSSION

The Theological-Civic Convergence: A Shared Conceptual Framework

The findings of this study reveal that teachers in the four selected *pesantren* do not view religious moderation as a shallow political catchphrase or an external government imposition. Instead, there is a profound conceptualization of moderation as an integrated value system that bridges classical Islamic doctrine with modern civic responsibility. The first dimension of this perspective is rooted in the theological concept of *wasathiyyah* (the middle path). By framing moderation as a normative religious duty rather than a secular requirement, teachers provide a "theological immune system" for students against extremist ideologies. This perspective strengthens previous research suggesting that religious institutions are most effective in promoting social harmony when they derive their legitimacy from sacred texts and internal scholarly traditions rather than top-down political directives.

Furthermore, the study identifies a Theological-Civic Convergence, where constitutional values such as national commitment (NKRI) are seamlessly woven into the fabric of religious practice. The data indicate that teachers use specific Qur'anic foundations, such as *QS. al-Baqarah: 143* regarding the *ummatan wasathan* (moderate community), to justify their loyalty to the Indonesian state. This alignment refutes the common Western orientalist perception that traditional Islamic education is inherently resistant to the modern nation-state. On the contrary, the *pesantren* in Pasuruan, Bangil, Bekasi, and Aceh Jaya demonstrate that Islamic boarding schools can function as primary agents of national cohesion by providing a religious rationale for pluralism and tolerance (Abidin et al., 2025; Heriyono, 2024; Rosela et al., 2025).

Analytically, this conceptual framework is supported by a diverse array of knowledge sources, ranging from the *Kitab Kuning* (classical yellow books) to contemporary digital portals. The presence of these diverse sources indicates that the teachers' understanding of moderation is both normative and contextual. This multidimensionality proves that moderation is both a normative duty to tradition and a contextual response to modern challenges.

Finally, the consistent emergence of indicators such as anti-violence and cultural accommodation (*al-'adah al-muhakkamah*) across the four sites suggests a holistic social ethic. Teachers across diverse backgrounds—from the modernist SPEAM to the traditionalist Dalwa—share a consensus that religious practices must not infringe upon the rights of others. This finding constructs a new understanding of the "moderate ecosystem," where religious instruction is inseparable from social conduct. By synthesizing meanings, sources, and indicators into a unified perspective, these *pesantren* establish a robust foundation for the *Integrative Construction Model*, ensuring that moderation is lived rather than just taught.

Novelty of the Integrative Construction Model: Beyond Curricular Instruction

The most significant contribution of this research is the identification of the Integrative Construction Model, which provides a structured, strategic management approach to fostering moderation. Unlike previous studies that focus almost exclusively on curricular content or the *Kyai's* charisma, this model highlights the operationalization of values through a five-step sequence: clarity of purpose, material mastery, pedagogical execution, experiential reinforcement, and institutional regulation. This sequence demonstrates that fostering moderation is a systematic management task that requires alignment across all levels of the institution. The model provides a blueprint for other religious institutions seeking to move beyond abstract discourse toward measurable educational outcomes.

The model's novelty lies in its "inductive construction"—it was not a pre-conceived framework imposed on the data, but emerged from the empirical realities of how teachers manage student behavior. For instance, the transition from "mastering materials" to "pedagogical implementation" highlights the gap between knowing moderation and practicing it. The *pesantren* studied address this gap by transforming classroom theories into *halaqah* (discussion circles) and *muhadharah* (speech exercises). This finding refutes the criticism that religious education is overly focused on rote memorization. Instead, it shows a sophisticated move toward "constructivist learning," where students are active participants in interpreting moderation within their specific social contexts.

Moreover, the model emphasizes the role of "Experiential Reinforcement" through extracurricular programs. Whether it is through the *Tapak Suci* martial arts at SPEAM or journalism and theater at At-Taqwa, these activities are not mere hobbies; they are intentional "laboratories of moderation." In these settings, students must cooperate with peers from different backgrounds, negotiate conflicts, and demonstrate leadership—all of which are essential components of a moderate character. This study strengthens the argument that non-formal education within the *pesantren* environment is just as critical, if not more so, than formal classroom instruction in shaping a student's worldview.

In a broader management context, the Integrative Construction Model represents a shift toward "Value-Based Institutional Governance." In this framework, institutional rules and procedures are not just for maintaining order, but are strategic tools for value transmission. When a student is sanctioned for using discriminatory language or for exclusivist behavior, the management is signaling that moderation is a non-negotiable institutional standard. This systematic incorporation of theological values into formal management processes is a unique feature of the *pesantren* studied, providing a

compelling alternative to secular management models that often strip values away from organizational governance.

Spatial Management and the Contact Hypothesis: The Role of Mixed Dormitories

A critical analytical finding of this study is the strategic use of "spatial management" through mixed dormitory placement as a tool for social engineering. Teachers at all four research sites emphasized that students from the same region should not be housed in the same room. This policy is a direct application of the Contact Hypothesis, which suggests that interpersonal contact between different groups is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice. By forcing students from Aceh, Java, and Papua to share a living space, the *pesantren* effectively breaks down primordial barriers and fosters a "mini-Indonesia" within the dormitory walls.

The effectiveness of this spatial regulation lies in its ability to transform abstract tolerance into a lived daily necessity. In a mixed dormitory, students cannot avoid diversity; they must negotiate their daily routines, language barriers, and regional differences in ritual practice. This creates a "forced socialization" that leads to genuine empathy and brotherhood (*ukhuwah*). This practice counters 'self-segregation' and the formation of 'exclusive enclaves' often seen in modern urban contexts. The *pesantren* model of deliberate mixing serves as a counter-narrative to this exclusivism (Fatah et al., 2025; Halomoan et al., 2023; Miftahuddin et al., 2024). The data from Dalwa and SPEAM shows that students who live in diverse dormitories are more likely to participate in community outreach and demonstrate respect for local customs (*al-'adah*). This demonstrates that the management of physical space is a silent but potent teacher of moderation.

Finally, the role of teachers in this spatial ecosystem is to act as "mediators of diversity." When conflicts arise in the dormitory—not if, but when—the teachers use these moments as "teachable moments" rather than merely disciplinary ones. This guidance ensures that the contact between different groups leads to positive outcomes rather than increased friction. Analytically, this underscores the importance of "Informal Mentoring" in the *pesantren* model. The success of moderation depends on the institution's ability to create a safe, supervised space where diversity is not just tolerated but celebrated as a divine gift (*sunnatullah*).

Adaptive Governance: Contextual Resilience Across Diverse Pesantren Systems

One of the core analytical strengths of this study is its comparative nature, which highlights the Adaptive Governance required to implement religious moderation in different institutional contexts. The four *pesantren*—ranging from the modernist Muhammadiyah-affiliated SPEAM to the traditionalist Hadhrami-influenced Dalwa and the regional Acehnese Dayah Darul Abrar—demonstrate that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to moderation. Successful management depends on the ability of institutional leaders to translate universal moderate values into the specific "cultural and theological language" of their respective communities.

Whether through digital portals in modernist systems or classical scholarship in traditional ones, moderation is effectively localized. This finding constructs a critical insight for policymakers: any attempt to standardize religious moderation through a rigid, centralized curriculum may face resistance. Instead, the "Integrative Construction Model" identified in this study is resilient precisely because it allows for local adaptation while maintaining a core commitment to balance and justice.

Moreover, the study reveals how regional local wisdom, particularly in Aceh Jaya (Darul Abrar), acts as a partner to religious moderation. The inclusion of traditional Acehnese customs (*Peusijek*) and community-based rituals into the *pesantren* life shows that moderation is most effective when it is indigenized. This refutes the idea that religious moderation is a Westernized or liberal project.

By showing that moderation can thrive within the most traditional and conservative settings, this study proves that traditionalism is not an obstacle to "moderation," provided that the leadership is committed to an inclusive and just interpretation of the faith.

The critical lesson here is the importance of "Institutional Autonomy" in fostering social cohesion. The management of these four *pesantren* shows that when religious leaders are given the agency to construct their own models of moderation, they produce outcomes that are more sustainable and deeply rooted in the community (Hidayat et al., 2025). This finding has global implications for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE), suggesting that the state should act as a facilitator of moderation rather than a regulator of doctrine. The resilience of the *Integrative Construction Model* lies in its ability to be both structured in management and flexible in cultural application.

Digital and Social Competence: Moderation as a Modern Social Ethic

A final critical dimension of the discussion is the emergence of religious moderation as a form of "digital and social competence. In the contemporary era, the *pesantren* studied have recognized that radicalization often occurs through digital channels and social media echo chambers. Consequently, the management model has evolved to include Digital *Tabayyun* (verification) and ethical social media engagement as part of the moderation material. Teachers in At-Taqwa and SPEAM, for instance, reported that mentoring students on how to verify news and avoid provocative content is now a priority. This represents a modern evolution of the traditional Islamic concept of *Akhlaq* (morality) (Juwaini et al., 2025; Salamah et al., 2025; Samdani et al., 2025; Sarbini et al., 2025).

This finding is particularly significant because it addresses the "reality gap" often found in traditional religious education, where students are taught classical values but lack the skills to apply them to modern technological challenges. By treating digital literacy as a component of religious moderation, these *pesantren* are producing graduates who are not only theologically moderate but also socially savvy. This reinforces the "Integrated Perspective" that moderation is a holistic social ethic. It suggests that a moderate individual is one who demonstrates justice and balance in both the physical world and the digital sphere.

Furthermore, the data on "Observable Outcomes" (Section 3.6) provides empirical evidence that these management strategies lead to genuine behavioral changes. The fact that *santri* demonstrate polite communication with residents of different social and religious statuses outside the *pesantren* suggests that the values have been successfully internalized (Fauzi et al., 2025; Mufrihah et al., 2025; R & Thohir, 2024). This refutes the Exclusivist Enclave theory, which posits that *pesantren* isolate students from the real world. On the contrary, the *pesantren* in this study function as "Bridges to Society," where the discipline and values learned within the walls are actively practiced in the public square.

In conclusion, the *Integrative Construction Model* proves that religious institutions can be structured agents of social cohesion. By combining cognitive understanding, behavioral habituation, and institutional enforcement, these *pesantren* have created a sustainable ecosystem for peace. The contribution of this study to international discussions on value-based education is the demonstration that "religious" and "modern/moderate" are not mutually exclusive categories. When theological principles are embedded within professional educational governance, they provide a powerful and authentic foundation for a stable, pluralistic society.

Summary of Discussion Analysis

The following table provides a critical summary of the research results, the theoretical frameworks used to analyze them, and the resulting contribution/novelty of this article.

Table 4. Discussion Analysis: Results, Theory, and Novelty.

Research Results	Theoretical Analysis	Contribution/Novelty
Moderation as Synthesis: Teachers conceptualize moderation as a fusion of <i>Wasathiyyah</i> (doctrine) and NKRI (citizenship).	Theological-Civic Convergence: Refutes the tension between religion and the nation-state; shows mutual reinforcement.	Proves that moderation is an authentic religious duty, ensuring higher sustainability and lower resistance.
Integrative Construction Model: A 5-stage sequential management process (Purpose, Material, Pedagogy, Experience, Regulation).	Strategic Management Theory: Shifts religious education from "informal charisma" to "structured governance."	Introduces a reproducible management model for fostering moderation beyond just curricular instruction.
Spatial Social Engineering: Use of mixed dormitory placement to break regional/primordial identities.	Contact Hypothesis (Allport): Proximity and shared goals in a controlled environment reduce prejudice and exclusivism.	Identifies "Spatial Ethics" as a vital, non-verbal tool in character building within boarding institutions.
Digital Tabayyun: Integration of digital literacy and critical thinking as indicators of a moderate character.	Constructivist Learning & Modern Akhlaq: Expands traditional morality to address 21st-century technological challenges.	Adds "Digital Moderation" as a critical new competence in the <i>pesantren</i> educational framework.
Adaptive Implementation: Variations in practice across Modernist, Salaf, and Regional <i>pesantren</i> systems.	Contextual Constructivism: Argues that moderation must be translated into local theological and cultural languages.	Provides a "Pluralist Management" approach that respects institutional autonomy while achieving national goals.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers across the four researched *pesantren* possess an integrative perspective that bridges the gap between theological theory and educational practice. Religious moderation is not merely understood as an abstract concept of *wasathiyyah*, but is operationalised into a lived social ethic within the *pesantren* ecosystem. This internalisation is achieved through the "Integrative Construction Model," which systematically synchronises classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, and the enforcement of institutional discipline. By embedding moderation values into the daily regulatory framework and dormitory life, these institutions transform theological principles into habitual behaviours, as evidenced by students' respectful social interactions and their critical, non-provocative engagement with contemporary issues.

Theoretically, this research contributes to Islamic education management by presenting a model that incorporates moderation into formal governance without abandoning the traditional study of classical texts (*kitab kuning*). The study confirms that *pesantren* function as sophisticated agents of social cohesion where management structures—such as multicultural dormitory placement and extracurricular leadership—act as "laboratories of tolerance." This model demonstrates that sustainable moderation arises from a systemic institutional environment rather than from fragmented efforts. In

practice, the success of this model underscores the necessity of continuous professional development for educators and of a collaborative governance approach among religious institutions, the government, and local communities to strengthen national cohesion.

However, this study has limitations as it primarily focuses on teachers' perspectives within specific institutional contexts, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across all types of *pesantren* in Indonesia. Therefore, future research should broaden the scope by involving a more diverse range of *pesantren* and incorporating the direct voices and longitudinal experiences of the *santri*. Future research should involve diverse demographics to explore how these values are sustained against evolving socio-political challenges.

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