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ACTUALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION VALUES IN PONDOK PESANTREN

Ahmad Irfan Mufid

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

irfan.mufid@uinjkt.ac.id

Gustin

IAIN Syaikh Abdurrahman Siddik Bangka Belitung, Bangka Belitung, Indonesia

gustin@iainsasbabel.ac.id

Abstract

Among the issues in this nation that always have the potential to cause conflict and are easily provoked is the religious issue. This study not only captures religious moderation as a normative concept or institutional policy but also examines the process of internalizing its values through classical and contemporary literature that forms the Pondok Pesantren learning curriculum. The method used in this research is the qualitative research method. The research location includes three Pondok Pesantren: Daar el-Qolam in Tangerang, Darul Arqam in Garut, and Bahrul Ulum in Tambak Beras. The data collection techniques used in this study were in-depth interviews and participant observation. The data analysis used was qualitative data analysis. Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded regarding the actualization of religious moderation values in Pondok Pesantren education: values are justice, balance, simplicity, tolerance, unity and brotherhood, honesty and truth, non-discrimination, and preserving civilization thru students at Islamic boarding schools. In implementing religious moderation values, Bahrul Ulum Jombang Pondok Pesantren demonstrates a more comprehensive approach compared to the two modern Pondok Pesantren that were the research objects. In addition to implementing the values of moderation through the formal curriculum, this Pondok Pesantren also instills these values thru the study of yellow books to actualize religious moderation. Meanwhile, Darul Arqam Pondok Pesantren in Garut and Daar el-Qolam in Tangerang, implement a curriculum that balances religious and general sciences. The application of religious moderation values in both Pondok Pesantren is strengthened through various extracurricular



programs. This approach allows students to develop cross-cultural communication skills and tolerance.

Keywords: *Actualization, Moderation, Religiousness, Education, and Pondok Pesantren*

A. Introduction

The Ministry of Religious Affairs is consistent and up-to-date in socializing religious moderation in society in general and educational institutions, particularly Pondok Pesantren education in Indonesia. The main goal of this Ministry of Religious Affairs is to counter radicalism (Rofik & Misbah, 2021). The importance of religious moderation education for millennials is because this young generation is considered the most vulnerable to radical ideologies (Elvinaro & Syarif, 2021).

The concept of religious moderation aims to counter radicalism in religious understanding, not radicalism within religion. The importance of religious moderation is being socialized considering the many horizontal conflicts that have arisen due to religious issues being misunderstood, namely the existence of religious understandings taken from religious arguments textually, without understanding interpretation, the context of revelation, the context of origin, the principles of jurisprudence, and other tools for interpreting verses of the Quran (Nurish et al., 2025). Moderation means balance (neither excessive nor lacking). Moderation can also be understood as reducing violence, avoiding extremism, and being impartial (Arifin et al., 2025).

Religious moderation is a balanced religious attitude between belief in one's own religion (exclusive) and respect for others with different beliefs (inclusive), or tolerance toward followers of other religions. To avoid extreme and excessive fanaticism toward a particular group or sect, and to prevent revolutionary attitudes, a middle ground or balance is needed in understanding and practicing religion (Islam, 2020).

Commitment to the values of justice can be seen from the degree of one's commitment to moderation. Someone becoming more just can also be characterized by their ability to be moderate and balanced in all things. Conversely, if they are unable to be moderate and balanced in their life, it is highly likely that they will find it difficult to behave justly (Massoweang, 2020).



Religious moderation produces balance in religious practice and can distance oneself from excessive, revolutionary, and fanatical attitudes in religion. Diversity in this country can also flourish with the presence of religious moderation. This is due to the diverse cultural factors of Indonesian society, making it suitable for use in Indonesia (Muhammad, 2025).

Religious moderation has been practiced in Indonesia for a long time. This is proven by the existing and recognized trust in Indonesia; everyone knows what religious moderation is. As in the teachings of Islam, there is an explanation of the concept of washatiyah, which means equivalent or the same as tawasuth, which means moderation, i'tidal, which means justice, and tawazun, which means balance (Zaenurrosyid et al., 2020). This aligns with several verses in the Quran, namely in Surah Al-Qashash: 77, Surah Al-Baqarah: 143, Surah Al-Furqan: 67, Surah Al-Baqarah: 185, and Surah An-Nahl: 90. This explains the balance between this world and the hereafter, the balance in religious practice, the balance in material possessions, the balance between human rights and obligations, and the balance in justice. Religious moderation certainly has important principles that must be present in every attitude so that a person can be said to have a moderate attitude in religion, namely justice, balance, and tolerance.

Tolerance is more about open-mindedness, respecting different beliefs, and being willing to accept diverse perspectives and stances, even if these differences sometimes don't align with individual or group viewpoints (Muhtarom et al., 2020). Among the issues that always have the potential to cause conflict and are easily provoked in this nation are religious issues. The human tendency to side with one group or another – due to a shared sense of fate, ideology, and belonging – is unavoidable. One example of a case that occurred is the bloodiest conflict in Ambon between Muslims and Christians in 1991, which led to a prolonged and devastating wave of cruelty and brutality of war, harming many parties. Next, a frequent conflict among Muslims is the feud between Salafi-Wahhabi followers and Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) followers. This was triggered by the conflicting religious attitudes of the two groups, namely the inclusive and accommodating NU preaching style toward local culture, which was then opposed by the Salafi-Wahabi group who wanted to purify



Islam from all forms of traditions and cultures they considered heresy and superstition (Tratzi, 2024).

In response to this, it is necessary to conduct an empirical data study on the quantity of the Indonesian nation in terms of religious diversity. Here is the data on the population of Indonesia by religion for the first semester of 2024, based on information from the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Ditjen Dukcapil) of the Ministry of Home Affairs:

Table 1
Population of Indonesia by Religion (First Semester 2024)

No	Religion	Population (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Islam	245.973.915	87,08
2	Christianity	20.911.697	7,40
3	Catholicism	8.667.619	3,07
4	Hinduism	4.744.543	1,68
5	Buddhism	2.004.352	0,71
6	Confucianism	76.636	0,03
7	Belief	98.822	0,03

Tabel 1, the total population of Indonesia during that period was 282,477,584 people, an increase of 1,752,156 people compared to the second half of 2023. Based on the data presented above, it can be concluded that the Indonesian people hold a variety of beliefs. This phenomenon is interesting for the author to further research the implementation of religious moderation in educational institutions or foundations and its relationship with social society (databoks.katadata.co.id, 2024).

Forms of religious intolerance, according to the Setara Institute, recorded 175 incidents and 333 acts of KBB violations in 2022. This shows an increase compared to the previous year, which recorded 171 incidents and 318 actions. The most frequent types of violations include disturbances to places of worship, denial of permission to build places of worship, and denial of religious sermons (Kemenag, 2022). The provinces with the most KBB violations in 2022 were: (1) East Java with 34 violations, (2) West Java with 25 violations, (3) DKI Jakarta with 24 violations, (4) Banten with 11 violations, (5) Central Java with 10 violations, (6) North Sumatra with 10 violations, (7) Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam with 7 violations, (8) West Kalimantan with 7



violations, (9) West Nusa Tenggara with 6 violations, and (10) Riau with 5 violations (detikcom, 2023). Meanwhile, a survey conducted by the Center for Islamic and Community Studies (PPIM) at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta shows that the majority of Muslim teachers in Indonesia hold highly intolerant and radical opinions (Convey Indonesia, 2018).

Researching moderation study sources in the yellow books studied at Pondok Pesantren is important because education exists to serve and build the character of Indonesian citizens. This religious moderation education aligns with the national education goals, which is to shape the character of Indonesian society. Furthermore, Thomas Lickona stated that education is a conscious effort to cultivate virtue, which is the realization of objectively good and character-driven human qualities (Lickona, 1996).

Based on the facts and interpretations of various studies related to the actualization of religious moderation values in Pondok Pesantren, the importance of this study on the actualization of religious moderation values in Pondok Pesantren: Daar el-Qolam Tangerang, Bahrul Ulum Jombang, and Darul Arqam, which are specifically internalized thru the books taught to the students. This study not only captures religious moderation as a normative concept or institutional policy but also examines the process of internalizing its values thru classical and contemporary literature that forms the Pondok Pesantren learning curriculum. This approach differs from previous studies, which generally focused on government policies, socio-religious practices, or the influence of charismatic figures, without deeply exploring the role of teaching books as the primary medium for shaping moderate attitudes among santri. Thus, this study offers a new perspective that connects the study of Pondok Pesantren text books with the practice of religious moderation at the practical level of traditional Islamic education. This research aims to actualize the values and sources of moderation in inclusive Pondok Pesantren education

B. Methods

The method used in this study is the qualitative research method. This method aims to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects holistically



and descriptively in the form of words and language, within a specific natural context. Qualitative research is descriptive and tends to use analysis with an inductive approach. Data is collected in the form of words and images, not numbers (Illu, 2025).

The research location includes three Islamic boarding schools with different characteristics, but all are known as Islamic educational institutions that implement moderate values. First, the modern Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam in Tangerang, Banten, which is one of the oldest modern Pondok Pesantren that combines religious education with general education. This Pondok Pesantren is known for prioritizing the principles of openness and tolerance thru Islamic teachings that are contextual and relevant to the challenges of the times. Second, the Darul Arqam Islamic Boarding School in Garut, West Java, which focuses on developing Muhammadiyah cadres with an Islamic approach oriented toward renewal (tajdid). This Pondok Pesantren instills inclusive, moderate Islamic values based on the spirit of nationalism. Meanwhile, the Bahrul Ulum Pondok Pesantren in Tambak Beras, Jombang, East Java, the third research location, is a salaf Islamic boarding school that also serves as a center for traditional Islamic studies, but it still adapts the values of moderation by instilling inter-madhab tolerance and cultural diversity in the lives of the students. These three locations were chosen because they represent Pondok Pesantren that consistently integrate moderate Islamic values into their learning and interactions with the community.

The data collection techniques in this study were in-depth interviews and participant observation. The researcher aimed to gain rich and diverse perspectives from the informants. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to delve into the personal experiences of the students and Pondok Pesantren caretakers, providing them with space to share their views and reflections on moderation values. On the other hand, participant observation offered the researcher the opportunity to directly see how these values are applied in the daily life of the Pondok Pesantren.

Qualitative data analysis used in this study includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This approach emphasizes that analysis is not a linear process, but rather interactive and cyclical, where researchers continuously move between these three components throughout the research process. In this data



analysis, data preparation, data coding, categorization and thematization, and the narrative presentation of interpretation were performed (Patton, 2023). In the context of this research, data analysis was conducted by identifying the main themes emerging from interviews and observations, and connecting these themes with existing theoretical frameworks (Inayah, 2024). This means that in this study, interviews and observations were conducted with the Pondok Pesantren authorities, and then the data collected from the Pondok Pesantren was linked according to the theme of religious moderation applied at that Pondok Pesantren.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

1. General Overview of Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum

a. Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam

The modern Islamic boarding school Daar el-Qolam is located in Pasir Gintung Village, Jayanti District, Tangerang Regency, Banten Province, and was founded on January 20, 1968. This Pondok Pesantren is the brainchild of Haji Qasad Mansyur, which was realized by Drs. K.H. Ahmad Rifai Arief (1942-1997). After K.H. Ahmad Rifa'i Arief passed away on June 15, 1997, the Pondok Pesantren was continued by K.H. Drs. Ahmad Syahiduddin, K.H. Adrian Mafatihullah Karim, and Hj. Enah Huwaenah. This Islamic educational institution is a model of integration between the Pondok Pesantren education system and the madrasah and school education systems. By July 2012, Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam had become the largest Islamic boarding school in Banten, with a population of approximately 5000 people. K.H. Ahmad Rifa'i Arief is a 1964 alumnus of the Modern Gontor Islamic Boarding School in Ponorogo, East Java. Before establishing the Daar el-Qolam Islamic boarding school, he first taught at his alma mater for two years. He also had the opportunity to study several classic books at several traditional Islamic boarding schools. In late 1967, he returned to his hometown, Gintung, to help his father, H. Qasad Mansyur, manage Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Masyariqul Anwar (مشارق الأنوار). H. Qasad Mansyur indeed desired to elevate the educational institution to a higher level. Then, he suggested that



his son, Ahmad Rifai Arief, establish a Pondok Pesantren just like his alma mater, Gontor. His father's advice was finally realized by Ahmad Rifa'i Arief, who established a Pondok Pesantren named Daar el-Qolam (دار القلم), which terminologically means "Village of Knowledge."

In its institutional structure, the Pondok Pesantren is beginning to develop with a variety of educational types and styles. Large Pondok Pesantren, such as Tebuireng Pondok Pesantren in Jombang, have developed madrasahs, public schools, and even universities within their walls, and they always use a curriculum in the process of achieving their institutional goals. But for Pondok Pesantren that follow the Salafi (traditional) pattern, the curriculum may not be well-formulated. According to Zamakhsyari, the religious texts that students must read and study include the groups "Nahwu and Sharaf", Ushul Fiqh, Hadith, Tafsir, Tauhid, Tasawwuf, as well as other branches such as Tarikh and Balaghah. This is a brief overview of the Pondok Pesantren curriculum regarding Salafism, which is generally the case. Islamic knowledge is drawn from classical texts and the provision of practical and simple skills

The model for the modern Islamic boarding school education system is the institutional system of the Islamic boarding school, which is managed in a modern way in terms of administration, teaching system, and curriculum (Rasyad et al., 2026). In this modern education system, the progress of Pondok Pesantren is not measured by the figure of a kyai or the large number of students, but by the orderliness of administrative management, for example, as seen in the minimal documentation of each incoming student and reports on the educational progress of all students. Formal educational institutions in modern Islamic boarding schools are called Kulliyatul Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah (KMI) (Hamdanah et al., 2025).

b. Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqam

Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqam is one of the largest Islamic boarding schools under the auspices of Muhammadiyah. The Pondok Pesantren is located on Jl. Raya Garut-Tasikmalaya, Cilawu, Garut, West Java. At this Pondok Pesantren, students not only study religious education, but there is also formal education. Founded with the aim of shaping responsible, independent, morally upright, and broad-minded student



characters. It's no wonder this Pondok Pesantren has seen quite rapid development from year to year. In terms of performance, this Pondok Pesantren is beyond doubt.

c. Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum Tambak Beras Jombang

Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum, often referred to as Pondok Pesantren Tambak beras, was founded in 1838 AD by K.H. Abdul Salam and is currently headed by Dr. K.H. M. Hasib Wahab Hasbullah as the highest authority. This traditional Pondok Pesantren is located in Tambakrejo Village, Jombang District, Jombang Regency, and is one of the oldest Islamic boarding schools in Jombang. In addition, this Pondok Pesantren is strongly affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama, as evidenced by the involvement of K.H. A. Wahab Hasbullah (an important figure at Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum) as one of the founders of the Nahdlatul Ulama organization.

K.H. Abdul Salam left his hometown for Tambak Beras to hide from the pursuing Dutch army. At that time, Tambakberas was still a wilderness full of wild animals and was known as a haunted area. K.H. Abdul Salam, along with his 25 followers, built a prayer room (surau), a mosque (langgar or mushalla), and a boarding school (pondok). That's why this Pondok Pesantren was initially known as pondok selawe (twenty-five). K.H. Abdus Salam himself is a descendant of King Brawijaya (Majapahit Kingdom), the son of Kiai Abdul Jabbar bin Kiai Abdul Halim (Prince Benowo) bin Kiai Abdurrahman (Joko Tingkir).

The curriculum of Madrasah Hidayatul Muhibbin Bahrul Ulum is divided into three levels: (1) Ula Class, with the provision that Nahwu material is taught using the memorization method and is not explained in detail, Shorof material is taught using the memorization and practice method, Kitab Reading material is taught using the sorogan method with the book Awamil with meaning, to train students to read books in the Pondok Pesantren style and introduce meaning symbols, Fiqh material is taught using the lecture, memorization, and practice (demonstration) method, Tauhid and Akhlaq material is taught using the lecture method, and Arabic Language material is taught using the memorization method; (2) Wustho Class, for teaching Nahwu material using the lecture, question-and-answer, memorization, and practice method, Shorof material is taught using the lecture, question-and-answer, memorization, and practice method, Kitab Reading material is taught by training students to read books



according to Nahwu and Shorof rules, Fiqh material is taught using the lecture, practice, and question-and-answer method, and Tauhid and Akhlaq material is taught using the lecture method; (3) Ulya Class, for teaching Fiqh material using musyawarah, Hadith material using the musyawarah and question-and-answer method, and Tafsir material using the deliberation.

2. Model for Actualizing Religious Education Values at Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum

a. Value of Faith

Faith can generally be understood as a belief that is justified in the heart, declared with the tongue, and proven by deeds based on sincere and pure intentions, always following the guidance of Allah SWT and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW (Azhari, 2025). In the Quran, there are several verses that mention the word "faith," including the verse from Surah al-Anfal, verse 2, which translates to:

"The believers are only those who, when the name of Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases their faith, and upon their Lord they put their trust." (QS: al-Anfal:2).

b. Value of Worship

In this regard, the portrayal of Islamic educational values among students at Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqam, and Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum, particularly those related to social care values, is evident when a student is sick; they collectively take the student to the UKS room. Nevertheless, efforts are still needed to ensure that all students can develop social care. The attitude of social care among students at Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqam, and Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum still requires significant guidance because students with low levels of social care are still found. Just like when studying in class, some of his friends happened to have pens that were jammed, and when they asked to borrow pens from their classmates, it turned out that the classmates who had two pens were reluctant to lend them for a long time.



c. Value of Moral

Politeness in speech is one of the values of Islamic education. Therefore, these Islamic educational values are very important to be practiced and instilled in students. The politeness of students in speaking to each other, especially with teachers at Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqam, and Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum, is already considered good. This is evident when students speak to their teachers; they always use gentle language, and no student is ever found yelling at their teacher. Although practices of communication between different students are still found. Therefore, teachers constantly remind students that politeness in speech is not only for teachers, but also applies to fellow students.

Regarding this, the picture of Islamic educational values among students at Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqam, and Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum, particularly those related to responsibility, is evident when they carry out tasks assigned by teachers, such as protocols and sermons after prayer, as well as cleaning the classrooms. This is considered good because they always perform these tasks with enthusiasm and a strong sense of responsibility.

3. Cultivating Religious Moderation Values in Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum

a. Fair

The fair values instilled by Islamic boarding schools are cultivated thru a process of reality, meaning that if students buy snacks from a stall or shop owned by a non-Muslim, the ustaz (religious teachers) do not forbid the students from doing so (Li et al., 2025). They didn't refuse and continued to adjust their delivery so as not to offend when there were non-Muslims, although it's undeniable that there was a sense of awkwardness. However, this shows that the Pondok Pesantren provides fair treatment to the wider community. This is what makes the students not discriminate when making friends and interacting with the wider community without interfering with each other's beliefs.



b. Balanced (*Tawazun*)

Balanced values in the sense of describing a way of thinking, attitude, and commitment to always siding with justice. This value is related to the previous value, where Islamic boarding schools instill a balanced value to be given to students as a form of boundaries in their interactions, so that students do not offend the beliefs of their friends who have different religions. Islamic boarding schools need to firmly set boundaries regarding the rules of communication and interaction with other religions. The ustaz at the Pondok Pesantren make the students respectful of them, and they also teach them to be balanced in maintaining their respective beliefs when interacting with their peers (Nazari & Mousavizadeh, 2025).

c. Straightforwardness/Simplicity

Simplicity in religious moderation means not being excessive toward one's own religion and religions that are not one's own (Azam et al., 2025). Pondok Pesantren need to equip students to respect and honor other religions. Students must continue to be given understanding and an increase in faith and piety toward their own Islamic beliefs. This aims to prepare students so they are not easily swept away by the current in further education. Meanwhile, in providing understanding in the classroom so that the students do not forget that the true purpose of religious moderation is to respect each other and increase piety, such as improving the students' faith and understanding moderation or the moderate nature.

d. Unity and Brotherhood (*Ittihad wa Ukhuah*)

The values of unity and brotherhood can be built in various ways, all depending on innovations between Pondok Pesantren (Tousuta et al., 2024). Some Pondok Pesantren instill this value thru Monday ceremonies with a pledge read together by all students. The students' pledge contains how to uphold diversity and unity. Additionally, there are social values that the students practice, such as reminding each other when someone is sick or has been struck by a misfortune, and other students also offer prayers. The behavior that occurs in Islamic boarding schools is also the same, where the students have strong solidarity, demonstrating their solid unity and brotherhood



e. Tolerance (Tasamuh)

Instilling an understanding of tolerance and how to apply it in daily life, as well as providing an understanding that Indonesia is a multicultural country with a variety of tribes, religions, ethnicities, and races. In this regard, understanding tolerance is a great asset that must be imparted to the students (Yıldırım & Güleğül, 2025).

The cultivation of tolerance in Pondok Pesantren, particularly in modern Pondok Pesantren environments like Daar el-Qolam Tangerang and Darul Arqam Garut, is implemented thru the use of books or textbooks that combine classical knowledge and contemporary literature. These two Islamic boarding schools emphasize the importance of tolerance thru understanding the evidence from the Quran and Hadith found in various reference books, such as *Riyāḍ as-Ṣāliḥīn* by al-Nawawī, *Bulūgh al-Marām* by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, and *al-Arbaʿīn an-Nawawīyyah*. In addition, books on contemporary Islamic studies such as *Fiqh as-Sīrah* by Muhammad Saʿīd Ramadan al-Būṭī and other works by moderate scholars were also used to emphasize that the values of tolerance are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings.

This approach combines textual methods by directly examining the sources of the evidence with contextual methods that relate the teachings to current social and religious realities. Cultivating tolerance is not only theoretical but also aims to foster inclusive, dialogical, and adaptive attitudes in the lives of santri within a pluralistic society (Junaedi et al., 2025).

Discussion

1. The Principle of Moderate Values

a. Nahdlatul Ulama's Religious Moderation

Many people reject the labeling of "Nusantara" on Islam because, for them, Islam is universal and cannot be limited by labels attached to anything. Furthermore, adding the word "nusantara" has removed the identity of Islam as a religion of mercy to all beings, thus making it imperfect (Khoiri et al., 2025). Their opinion is not wrong, but it is actually not relevant to the essence of Islam Nusantara.

Nusantara is a term that describes the archipelago from Sumatra to Papua. This word comes from Javanese manuscripts dating from around the 12th to the 16th



centuries, where it was used as a concept for the Majapahit Empire. Meanwhile, in 19th-century English-language literature, the archipelago refers to the Malay Archipelago. Ki Hajar Dewantara used this term in the 1920s as one of the recommendations for the name of a region in the Dutch East Indies. Because the archipelago is predominantly located within the territory of Indonesia, the term "nusantara" is usually synonymous with Indonesia (Suparno et al., 2025).

Islam Nusantara as a religious and cultural dimension that is intertwined with each other. This perspective embodies an Islam that compromises with territorial boundaries that have certain cultural roots. This resulted in a complete understanding of Islam that no longer presented itself rigidly and closed off, but valued diversity that could accommodate the values contained within a specific region (Fauji et al., 2025).

The normative doctrine of Islam Nusantara adheres to the same laws of faith and harmony as Muslims in any part of the world. To a certain extent, it has its own distinctiveness. Islam Nusantara encourages Nahdlatul Ulama followers to adopt a nationalistic attitude that prioritizes a balance between Islamic brotherhood, human brotherhood, and national brotherhood. This national policy aligns with the character of Indonesian society, which prioritizes harmony in interpersonal relationships, a moderate attitude, and a tendency to choose peaceful means to achieve harmony in social interactions. Therefore, in its movement, NU intends to manage the pillars of difference so that it can achieve consistent harmonization. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that Nahdlatul Ulama is a reformist and dynamic organization that is always guided by a moral spirit illuminated by moderate values (Sjaf et al., 2025).

b. Muhammadiyah's Religious Moderation

Muhammadiyah advocates the concept of tajdid to interpret the meaning of religious moderation. In the Muhammadiyah sense, tajdid has two meanings. First, the meaning of purification refers to the purification of Islamic beliefs mixed with the concepts of polytheism, innovation, and superstition. Second, tajdid means renewal, dynamism, and modernism, particularly in relation to matters of social interaction. Therefore, moderation/Wasathiyah in the view of Muhammadiyah has at least three characteristics: first, faith and worship are understood deeply, balanced, and broadly, not just superficially, and do not belittle others. Second, in terms of morals, it is not just



about following the Prophet's Sunnah in an attributive or symbolic way, but it must give rise to good teachings. Third, in Muamalah, it is progressive and dynamic. Beside the principle of tawasuth (moderation), Muhammadiyah also has the principles of tawazun (balance) and ta'adul (justice), so that Islam can be applied in an actual and functional way (Zara, 2025).

In Muhammadiyah, the face of Islamic moderation is embodied in the idea of progressive Islam. For Muhammadiyah, Progressive Islam is essentially a revitalization of the enlightenment ideas conceived by its founder, KH Ahmad Dahlan, more than two centuries ago. KH Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts before and during the establishment of Muhammadiyah were considered very comprehensive - if not too advanced - in the eyes of Indonesian society at that time. When society was confined to the mindset that women's space was limited to the domestic sphere (well, kitchen, and bed), KH Ahmad Dahlan and his wife Nyai Walidah pioneered the formation of a women's association named 'Aisyiyah, which was associated with the beloved wife of the Prophet. When there was a dichotomy between religious and general sciences, and general sciences were considered blasphemous, KH Ahmad Dahlan actually included some general sciences in the curriculum of schools managed by Muhammadiyah. He didn't even hesitate to adopt Western-style education systems, their way of dressing, and even socialize with them well.

Despite receiving criticism from many parties for his actions, KH Ahmad Dahlan never gave up on the progress of the community. Perhaps what KH Ahmad Dahlan is doing right now is ordinary and commonplace. However, if we use the parameters of that time, what Ahmad Dahlan did was certainly an extraordinary breakthrough that required determination and courage.

2. Religious Diversity and Religious Tolerance: A Moderate Attitude

The foundation is likened to the structure of a house, where the strength of the house rests on its foundation. If the foundation of religious understanding is strong, then faith in religion is also strong. However, conversely, if the foundation of religious understanding is weak, then faith in religion is also weak. Religion serves as a guide for



every follower because it is a direction for each follower to determine their goals and direction in life in this world (Alruwaili et al., 2025).

In reality, religious pluralism is not meant to undermine, belittle, or mix one religion with another, but rather to respect, recognize, and cooperate with each other. Therefore, religious pluralism is recognized as the foundation for acknowledging an existential religious plurality in seeking common ground between religions based on similarities thru universal human values within each religion. Indonesia itself highly values and respects all existing religious groups because Indonesia is composed of various ethnicities and religions. However, in reality, religious-based divisions and conflicts are very easy to occur and can even be caused by trivial matters (Mandelc, 2025).

Religious tolerance is a form of accommodation in social interaction. Socially religious people cannot deny that they must interact not only with their own group, but also with groups of different religions. Religious communities must strive to foster tolerance to maintain social stability and prevent ideological and physical clashes between people of different faiths. In religious tolerance, there are two types of religious tolerance: first, passive religious tolerance, which is the acceptance of differences as factual. Second, active religious tolerance, which involves engaging with others despite differences in religion. Active tolerance is a teaching of all religions (Ješe Perković, 2025). True religious tolerance is one of the main pillars for achieving harmony between religious communities. Living side by side, respecting and appreciating followers of other religions is one form of embodying tolerance. True tolerance is not mixing the worship of one religion with another.

Every human being has values that are believed in, adhered to, and practiced to maintain harmony among people. These values are known as local wisdom, which is a form of knowledge, beliefs, understanding, or insight, as well as customs or ethics that guide humans to have good relationships with each other. Therefore, local wisdom teaches humans about peace among themselves and their environment. In the context of interreligious relations, intolerance arises when there is prejudice or suspicion toward someone or a group other than oneself. Religion is responsible for the emergence of prejudice (Gill, 2025).



3. Actualizing the Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Strengthening Religious Moderation

a. Actualizing the Role of the Ustaz as a Conservator

Based on the results of interviews with the leaders of the Islamic boarding schools, it can be concluded that the views or perspectives of the ustaz as conservators toward something new in the Islamic boarding schools Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum are as preservers of the value of moderation (conservators). The ustaz in the Islamic boarding schools in these areas interpret this more as a framework for religious tolerance. Building values of justice, balance, simplicity, unity, and brotherhood has become the identity of these Islamic boarding schools and their respective environments. This aligns with the value of moderation promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Their role as conservators places a great responsibility on them to be able to behave well in conveying how religious moderation works. The Ustaz, as conservators, have a great responsibility to themselves and are required to always remind the students as well about recognizing and implementing religious moderation in their daily lives (Sabir et al., 2025).

b. Actualizing the Role of the Ustaz as a Inovator

The role of the ustaz (religious teacher) in Islamic boarding schools in building religious moderation includes: Conservator (maintaining the value system that is the essence of religious moderation), Innovator (teaching, guidance, or extracurricular activities), Transmitter (passing on these systems to students), Transformer (transferring the values of religious moderation thru organized activities), and Organizer (implementing the innovations made both in and out of the classroom; teacher, motivator, and role model) (Meeprasertsagool et al., 2025).

Based on interviews and observation results at the Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum Islamic boarding schools for all levels, interaction between teachers and students is always implemented 15 minutes before class begins. This activity is usually utilized by the ustaz (religious teachers) to provide guidance to the students, whether for daily evaluation of the students from the previous day, notification of



additional activities for that day, and according to the ustaz, this serves as an opportunity for them to engage in da'wah (religious propagation) in building religious moderation within the Pondok Pesantren (Islamic boarding school).

In short, the innovations carried out by the Islamic boarding schools Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum appear to be very different. The innovations carried out by Islamic boarding schools are not only thru their own behavior, but are also done in the form of scheduled and regular special guidance activities, and there are several activities that involve multi-religious activities. This presents an opportunity to demonstrate how to be fair, tolerant, and avoid blaming each other.

c. Actualizing the Role of the Ustaz as a Transmitter

The Ustaz, as the successor (transmitter), acts to convey the essence of these values of religious moderation. Based on interviews with several ustaz at Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum, it was stated that there is actually no in-depth planning required to build religious moderation as promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The program has essentially been running on its own and is not new. According to the ustaz as transmitters, because religious moderation is not a new matter, this program must always be reminded or conveyed to students in the future to further strengthen the building of religious moderation. This presentation on strengthening religious moderation is being delivered to provide understanding to the students at the Pondok Pesantren.

d. Actualizing the Role of the Ustaz as a Motivator

As motivators, the ustaz always motivate the students with inspiring Islamic stories, and not infrequently, they also motivate the students with stories from their own experiences. Beside telling stories, the ustaz also motivated by explaining the meaning of religious moderation, which, without our realizing it, was able to generate motivation for the students present. They motivate the students thru morning speeches during gatherings or simply thru light conversations before activities.

e. Actualizing the Role of the Ustaz as a Guide

It is not easy for the ustaz to guide in building religious moderation. This is because of the diverse family backgrounds, making it very necessary to raise



awareness of the importance of religious moderation values in life, both in Pondok Pesantren and outside the Pondok Pesantren environment.

Ustaz still need to communicate with parents in order to continue efforts to build a system of religious moderation values. In addition, the ustaz also have good relationships and maintained communication to communicate the behavior of their students, even tho it's sometimes only at certain times. However, this can be done as a form of synchronization in guiding the students.

f. Actualizing the Role of the Ustaz as a Transformator

The values of religious moderation in Pondok Pesantren are not only felt by the students, but also by the ustaz (religious teachers) thru their cohesiveness in activities. Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum, based on observation, have not yet shown an impact from religious moderation. However, the Pondok Pesantren strongly support this in the future by organizing religious activities within the Pondok Pesantren to enhance learning effectiveness and strengthen religious moderation.

According to the ustaz at the Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and Bahrul Ulum Pondok Pesantren, the values that can be transformed are justice, balance, simplicity, tolerance, unity and brotherhood, uprightness and righteousness, non-discrimination, preserving civilization, and tolerance toward the students at the Pondok Pesantren. The Pondok Pesantren also acknowledges that special programs cannot be offered at this time because they feel religious moderation is not only the responsibility of the ustaz, but also the responsibility of every ustaz present. The future indicators of religious moderation according to Pondok Pesantren, the main ones are strengthening the faith of the students and strengthening brotherhood within the framework of religious moderation thru the practice of its values.

g. Actualizing the Role of the Ustaz as a Organizer

Organizing an educational activity is a very important role for the ustaz. Success in the activity will be measured thru its implementation, and the output of the activity will be felt after its organization. Pondok Pesantren have a very diverse range of programs. For example, Pondok Pesantren have unique characteristics in building religious moderation, such as Pondok Pesantren Daar el-Qolam, Darul Arqam, and



Bahrul Ulum. This Pondok Pesantren has a relaxed Friday activity, so the students are allowed to shop outside the Pondok Pesantren. Religious moderation occurs when one of the owners of the snack stall where the students buy snacks is Christian. The Pondok Pesantren allows students the freedom to buy snacks from stalls or shops owned by non-Muslims.

With this kind of thing, there is a positive value in Pondok Pesantren, which highly values pluralism in Pondok Pesantren and unifies perceptions to maintain harmony from that pluralism (Rios et al., 2025). Character building in that area also influences the strengthening of religious moderation values. The organization in building religious moderation carried out by the ustaz at these three Pondok Pesantren is still thru classroom learning and example. Based on the descriptions above, with diverse organization, Pondok Pesantren ustads essentially play their role in building religious moderation. This organization is also influenced by the innovations made by Pondok Pesantren, which are well-organized and implemented by the Pondok Pesantren (Subiyantoro et al., 2026).

D. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded regarding the actualization of the value of religious moderation in Pondok Pesantren education, specifically at Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum Jombang, with its salaf style, which tends to maintain teaching methods based on classic yellow books and the scholarly traditions of previous scholars, even tho this Pondok Pesantren actually has formal educational institutions. Without the Rahamatan Lil Alamin strengthening project initiated by the government, Bahrul Ulum Pondok Pesantren has implemented religious moderation based on the yellow books taught to the students. Meanwhile, the modern-style Pondok Pesantren Darul Arqam Garut and Daar el-Qolam Tangerang place more emphasis on integrating the formal curriculum with moderate Islamic values, and adopting a contextual learning approach in line with the times. In implementing the values of religious moderation, Bahrul Ulum Jombang Pondok Pesantren demonstrates a more comprehensive approach compared to the two modern Islamic boarding schools that were the subject of the study. In addition to



implementing the values of moderation thru the formal curriculum in Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Madrasah Aliyah, this Pondok Pesantren also instills these values thru the study of yellow books. When differing interpretations are found, such as the view on the permissibility of killing an apostate who refuses to pay zakat, perform prayer, or adhere to other religious laws as stated in Fath al-Mu'in, the kiai provides contextual explanations. Meanwhile, Darul Arqam Garut Pondok Pesantren and Daar el-Qolam Tangerang, as examples of modern Pondok Pesantren, implement a curriculum that balances religious and general sciences. This integration aims to equip students not only with Islamic scientific competence but also with critical thinking skills and national insight. The application of religious moderation values in both Pondok Pesantren is strengthened thru various extracurricular programs, such as interfaith dialogs, seminars, and cross-cultural discussions, which are designed to broaden students' perspectives on diversity.

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