

## Fostering religious moderation education: case study of moderate da'wah activities in pesantren iuqi bogor student

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Received: 13-04-2025

Revised: 24-05-2025

Accepted: 21-06-2025

### KEYWORDS

Religious moderation,  
students, boarding school

### ABSTRACT

Indonesia, with the ideology of Pancasila as the foundation of the state, prioritizes the principle of harmonious life between religious communities. Nonetheless, in recent years, the rise of radicalism, intolerance, and violence in the name of religion has raised serious concerns about religious education, especially in Islamic educational institutions. This research focuses on the application of religious moderation in the Iuqi Bogor student pesantren, as an effort to overcome these challenges. Religious moderation, defined as an intermediate attitude that avoids extremism, is key in maintaining social harmony in multicultural Indonesia. Through a qualitative approach, this study aims to explore how the concept of religious moderation is applied in the pesantren environment. Hopefully, the findings of this study can contribute to the development of understanding of religious moderation in Indonesia and become a policy recommendation for strengthening religious moderation in pesantren.

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## Introduction

Indonesia's state ideology, Pancasila, prioritizes the principle of peaceful coexistence among religious communities. Indonesia can even be used as an example for other countries in terms of managing cultural and religious diversity, and is considered successful in maintaining harmony in religious and state life. Although conflicts or social problems sometimes arise, the nation has always been able to overcome and re-utilize the power of unity and integrity to become a bigger and stronger country. (Arifin, S, 2022)

The rise of radicalism, inter-religious intolerance, and violence committed in the name of religion in Indonesia in recent years has become a serious concern for educational institutions, especially Islamic educational institutions. This is particularly shameful because often the perpetrators of radical acts are not individuals who have a general higher education, but those whose religious understanding is relatively limited. Many of them only acquire religious knowledge through social media and internet search engines, not through direct learning from religious experts or formal or informal Islamic educational institutions. As a result, the supposedly deep understanding of Islamic teachings, especially related to the concept of jihad, is misused and distorted to support radicalism, intolerance and violence in the name of religion. (Soleh & Hasanah, 2021)

In line with the previous discussion, these steps can be implemented through various approaches, one of which is through appropriate religious education. One form of education that has contributed a lot to the progress of Islamic civilization, especially in Indonesia, is pesantren institutions. Pesantren, in this context, is one of the solutions that is expected to help solve various religious problems that have been a long-standing challenge in Indonesia. However, pesantren education in Indonesia is often too focused on traditional aspects, which neglects the ability to adapt to modern life. In fact, the understanding and scope of pesantren is actually very broad and deep to be explained in a short time. The role of pesantren in shaping Islamic civilization in Indonesia is very real, even important in creating peace in a diverse society. In this case, religious moderation becomes very important to maintain harmony between religions. A moderate approach to religion, supported by various parties, can be an effective step to reduce the emergence of radical attitudes that can end in acts of terrorism.(Mawardi,2022)

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), moderation is defined as an effort to reduce violence and avoid extremes. The word comes from the English *moderation*, which means moderation or moderation. In general, moderation refers to a moderate and neutral attitude, without taking sides. In the context of religious moderation, it is important to have a balanced attitude and mutual respect for the diversity of beliefs. In Indonesia, which has a multicultural society, the attitude of religious moderation needs to be instilled, namely with a neutral attitude without feeling that his belief is the most correct. The main purpose of religious moderation is to maintain common interests, balance the diversity of the nation, and create a harmonious and prosperous religious life.( Ni Made Anggi Arlina Putri,2021)

In this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs plays a very important role as a pioneer in implementing the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) for the 2020-2024 period, especially in terms of religious moderation. The goal of this RPJMN is to strengthen the sense of tolerance, harmony, and harmony in social life. There are three main approaches in implementing religious moderation in higher education, namely: first, the insertion strategy, which inserts moderation values in every course material; second, strategies in learning approaches that encourage critical thinking, tolerant attitudes, respect for other people's opinions, and being sportive and responsible; and third, by organizing training on religious moderation.(Sumarto,2021)

Thus, the world of pesantren, especially the student pesantren of Institut Ummul Quro Al-Islami Bogor IUQI, has carried out the stages of implementing an understanding of religious moderation. This research will try to explore the process of implementing da'wah activities with an understanding of religious moderation in the IUQI student pesantren environment.

## Method

This research method falls into the category of qualitative research. Qualitative research refers to a method that produces descriptive data, both in the form of written and spoken words, as well as observable individual behavior. The data is taken from a natural context and analyzed thoroughly, focusing on a deep understanding of the individual or phenomenon being studied.( W. Mantja Ethnography, 2015)

The informant in question is the head of the religious moderation study program, how the idea of religious moderation da'wah activities can be realized and about how the religious moderation da'wah process takes place. Data collection techniques that will be carried out are in-depth interviews, observation, documentation and participants (Sugiyono, 2016). The data that has been collected through in-depth interviews, observations, documentation and participants is then carefully analyzed in three stages, namely data condensation, data presentation then finally drawing conclusions (Miles, 2014).

## Result and Discussion

### 1. Results

The previous research as a basis for knowing the gap in this research is as follows:

Research written by Mardani and siswanto with the title "Internalization of Religious Moderation Values in Santri Pesantren Al-Mazaya Paser Paser Regency East Kalimantan Province". In his research, through creative da'wah, the Al-Mazaya pesantren provides insight that santri are at the forefront of social change. Planting the understanding of religious moderation as the capital of santri after graduating and plunging in the community (Mardani, 2024).

In line with the above research, research written by M. Toriqul Huda et al with the title "Pesantren and Religious Moderation: Study of Syarif Hidayatullah Student Boarding School in Kediri City". In his research, the researcher said that the caregiver of the boarding school provided an understanding of religious moderation in the form of studies and applied it to daily life at the boarding school. This aims to provide an understanding so that students do not easily blame the religious attitudes of other groups (M. Toriqul Huda et al, 2023).

Similar research was also written by Maskuri et al with the title "Developing Religious Moderation of Mahasantri Through Ta'lim Ma'hadi in Student Pesantren". In his research, the inculcation of religious moderation through strengthening the character of Ta'lim Ma'hadi with three patterns, namely teaching, nurturing and queuing patterns. The three patterns are integrated in the teaching curriculum with the aim of making students understand justice, balance, harmony and moderation (Maskuri et al, 2020).

The three studies above show researchers that many pesantren educational institutions have implemented an understanding of religious moderation. The IUQI Bogor student boarding school will be its own distinctive novelty regarding religious moderation as a moderate da'wah activity.

#### Religious Moderation

Pesantren is an educational institution with historical requirements, the characteristics of pesantren are known as traditional salafiyah institutions which are seen as exclusive to change compared to other educational institutions (Mochtar, 2019). The system or pattern of pesantren learning that does not prioritize cognitive elements will have a negative impact on the output of the pesantren itself (Sumarto, 2019).

The proliferation of pesantren-based educational institutions invites the assumption that many pesantren are "fake". This may be because the community smells a scientific aroma that is blurred from customs or traditions (Hasani, 2016). The development of the times is difficult to control, triggering many new terms such as globalization, modernity to the term moderation (Anwar, 2011). Pesantren has a teaching pattern that holds a million unique things depending on the characteristics contained in the institution that are interesting to reveal.

The term moderation according to KBBI is the reduction of violence. While the term is a tolerant attitude when between two different views and does not dominate against opposing views (Amin, 2014). Religious moderation is moderate and respectful of differences in religious beliefs by not feeling the most right and blaming others, a neutral attitude in religion is needed as citizens who have the basis of Unity in Diversity in order to achieve benefits in religion (Ni Made, 2021).

Researchers see that pesantren and religious moderation are relevant to be applied. As in some previous studies that pesantren are at the forefront of social change in the midst of the

times that are difficult to control.

Indonesia is a country rich in ethnic, tribal, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. Based on the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), religion is a system that regulates belief and worship of God Almighty, as well as rules governing relationships between humans and the surrounding environment. Religion provides guidance for its adherents to live a more purposeful personal and social life, because in essence, religion teaches goodness to its adherents.

In Indonesia there are also various religions, but officially only six are recognized, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. The legal recognition of these religions is stated in Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (PNPS) Number 1 of 1965 on the Prevention of Abuse and/or Blasphemy of Religion, specifically in Article 1. However, other religions and beliefs such as Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism and Taoism are not banned in Indonesia. They are still guaranteed their rights under Article 29 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, as long as they do not violate applicable regulations or other laws and regulations (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 1997).

Moderation comes from the word "moderate" or in English "moderation," which implies a position that is not excessive or in the middle. Moderation is not an attitude of weakness or irresponsibility, nor is it a sign of indecisiveness in dealing with problems. Rather, moderation seeks to find a middle ground that allows us to be neutral, not stuck on the extreme left or right. Sometimes, to achieve balance, we have to combine seemingly opposing elements. Thus, moderation is about creating balance, though not with a necessarily structured or systematic approach (Shihab, 2022).

In Arabic, moderation is described by the word *wasath* or *wasathiyah*, which is the same as the words *tawassuth*, meaning middle, *i'tidal*, meaning fair, and *tawazun*, meaning balanced. A *wasith* is someone who applies *wasathiyah* principles. *Wasathiyah* itself is defined as "the best option" in Arabic. Whatever term is used, they all mean the same thing: fair, which in this case means choosing the middle ground between extreme options. Even the word *Wasith* has spread into Indonesian as "*wasit*", which has three meanings: 1) a mediator, an intermediary (e.g. in business or trade); 2) a mediator (separator, reconciler) between people in dispute; and 3) a leader in a game (Saifuddin 2019)

To be religious means to recognize and practice the principles of a religion. Religion encompasses one's spiritual beliefs and actions with regard to a particular religion or faith. It involves personal dedication to the faith in aspects of the teachings, ceremonies, rules, and values associated with that religion. Religion also includes belief in a spiritual entity, God, or higher power. It includes beliefs regarding the origin and meaning of life, humanity's relationship with the universe, and the morals and ethics that direct individual behavior in daily life (Iqbal, 2015).

When discussing religious moderation in relation to religious traditions, the discussion is not limited to Islam. The issue of moderation is also relevant to all religions, not just a claim on the part of Islam. Extremism, fundamentalism and terrorism are not only threats to Islam, but also to other religions. In Indonesia, all religions in the country adapt to the spirit of nationality. All religions face similar challenges, namely how to interpret the religious doctrines recorded in their respective holy books. Therefore, what is expected is the adjustment of the ideologies of these religions so that they can be well integrated in Indonesia's multicultural society.(Suryani,2019)

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia explains that religious moderation is a worldview, attitude, and behavior that always chooses the middle way, is fair, and avoids extremism in religion. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin stated that religious moderation is

a process of understanding and practicing religious teachings in a fair and balanced manner, thus avoiding extremism or exaggeration. A moderate attitude in religion is crucial for a multicultural society like Indonesia, because with this approach, diversity can be appreciated wisely, and tolerance and justice are created among the people (Saifuddin, 2016).

Religious moderation has a vital role as a cultural strategy in maintaining Indonesia's identity and diversity. As a nation rich in diversity, the founding fathers of this country have successfully agreed on the basics of national life through Pancasila, which is the foundation of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Pancasila has proven effective in uniting various ethnic groups, tribes, languages, cultures and religions. Indonesia does not make religion the basis of the state, but also does not separate religion from public life. Religious values are respected and intertwined harmoniously with traditional values and local wisdom. In fact, some religious teachings are adopted as part of state law to ensure that religious and cultural practices can take place peacefully and harmoniously.

### **Islam in Understanding Religious Moderation**

In the Islamic perspective, moderation teaches the importance of mutual respect for differences, as well as openness in accepting diversity, be it in terms of mazhab or religion. These differences should not be a barrier to building cooperation based on human values (Dawing, 2017).

Religious moderation in Islam is often referred to as moderate Islam or wasathiyyah Islam. The basic principles of wasathiyyah Islam are listed in the Qur'an, including ta'adl (justice), tawassuth (moderate), tawazun (balance), ta'awun (mutual help), and tasamuh (tolerance), as well as other values. In the view of Islam, moderation means promoting a tolerant attitude towards diversity and openness in accepting differences, be it differences in religion or sects within the religion. With the principle of wasathiyyah that reflects the character of Muslims who are full of compassion, Islam has emerged as a religion that is "rahmatan li al-'alimin," as stated in QS. Al-Anbiya' (21:107), which means, "We did not send you but to be a mercy for all the worlds." Therefore, this character is also known as "Rahmah Wasathiyyah Islam." (Ahmad, 2021)

In language, wasathiyyah means being in the middle between two opposing sides. In the context of Islamic moderation, this does not mean being between right and wrong, but rather being between extremism and fanaticism. Islamic moderation offers flexible teachings, encourages peaceful living, tolerance and respect for the rights of minorities. This approach can reduce violence, avoid extremism and radicalism in religious practice, thus supporting the harmony and stability of the state. (Masykuri, 2019)

As Muslims, we are obliged to believe that Islam is the true and most appropriate religion. However, this belief should not make us belittle or insult other religions, as this can trigger divisions in interfaith relations. Instead, we should emulate the attitude of the Prophet Muhammad when he led Medina, who always showed mutual respect and maintained unity between people. Thus, based on this understanding, truth is not only limited to one group, but can also be found in other groups, including in different religions. This view stems from the belief that all religions that exist today come from the revelations of the prophets who were sent, and basically have the same goal, which is to lead to salvation, although in different ways or sharia. (A. Shihab, 1999).

In the midst of Indonesia's cultural diversity, the application of moderate Islam can play an important role in strengthening the sense of unity and promoting solidarity between different groups of society. Islamic moderation therefore seeks to preserve the basic values of Islamic teachings while opening up opportunities for dialog and mutual understanding between religions. Moderation in Islam is not an attempt to eliminate differences or unify religious



beliefs, but to create a respectful understanding and encourage harmony between different religious communities, in order to create a peaceful, serene and cooperative life based on humanitarian principles (Made Saihu, 2022).

### **Pesantren Encounters with Religious Moderation**

Pondok Pesantren is an Islamic educational institution whose main focus of learning is Islamic religious knowledge, which is run by ustadz and ustadzah as managers and teachers, while santri act as students. Etymologically, the word "pesantren" comes from the form "pe-santri-an," where the word "santri" which means "student" in Javanese is given the prefix "pe" and the suffix "an," which refers to the place where the santri live (Thohir, 2021).

In terminology, pesantren is a traditional Islamic educational institution that focuses on learning, understanding, appreciating, and applying Islamic teachings, with an emphasis on strengthening religious moral values as a guide in daily life (Styaningsih, 2016).

Madjid (1997: 19-20) explains in depth the origin of the word "santri". He argues that the term comes from the Sanskrit word "sastri", which means literate person. This word is associated with the intellectual class in Javanese society, who acquire religious knowledge through Arabic books. Thus, santri is defined as someone who has religious knowledge, especially through Arabic books, or at least is able to read the Koran, which fosters a serious attitude in studying religion. In addition, there is also the view that the word "santri" comes from the Javanese "cantrik", which means a person who always follows his teacher wherever he goes, with the aim of learning certain skills, as depicted in the puppet show.

In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, pesantren is defined as a residence for santri or a dormitory where students learn to study the Koran. In terms of terms, pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that usually provides housing for students in dormitories, with a teaching focus on classical and general books. The main objective of pesantren is to equip students with a thorough understanding and mastery of Islamic religious knowledge, as well as practicing it in everyday life, with an emphasis on the importance of morals and morals in social life. (Alimas'udi, 2015)

Pesantren play a role as social institutions and religious broadcasting media. In general, communities around pesantren tend to have better conditions compared to communities far from pesantren. This is due to the role of pesantren in Islamic education, which focuses on the formation of society through religious knowledge. The relationship between pesantren and the community is more emphasized on the bond between parents, santri, and pesantren, as well as the thariqah network, which often has a closer relationship with pesantren than the relationship between parents and santri in general. As an educational institution, pesantren organize various types of education, including madrasah, public schools, vocational schools, and universities, as well as non-formal education such as skills courses. This education aims to prepare santri to be independent after completing pesantren education, because pesantren emphasize independence rather than preparing santri to become government employees. Therefore, the boarding school not only functions as a place of knowledge transfer, but also as a place of character building for each student. (Syafe'i. 2017)

After the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, the education system was adopted by Islam. The term pesantren itself does not come from Arabic, but from India. However, when viewed in terms of traditional education in Indonesia, the term "pondok," which comes from the Arabic word "funduq," means a place of lodging or boarding for travelers, is more often used. The main objective of pesantren is to guide santri to become individuals with an Islamic personality, who are able to practice their knowledge and act as a mubaligh in society through their knowledge and deeds. The Ministry of Religious Affairs classifies pesantren into three types, namely Salafiyah Pesantren, Khalafiyah (Ashriyah) Pesantren, and Combination Pesantren. As an

educational institution, pesantren use various teaching methods, such as sorogan, bandongan or wetonan, halaqoh, tahfiz (memorization), and muazakaroh/bathsul masa'il. Both students who live in pesantren and those who study on a daily basis, they both study at the same time and place (Bachrong, 2018).

In addition, there are many more pesantren that apply various learning methods in various aspects of Islamic education. One example is the Institut Ummul Quro Al Islami Student Pesantren located in Bogor Regency. In addition to teaching religious knowledge, this pesantren also focuses on teaching about religious moderation. This is very important because religious moderation is the main foundation for realizing a harmonious life, an approach that is still rarely found in many pesantren in Indonesia..

## 2. Discussion

### **Moderate Da'wah on Religious Moderation Studies at the IUQI Bogor Student Boarding School**

Based on the results of interviews with ustadz Irwan Maulana as the head of religious moderation at the IUQI Bogor student pesantren, he also explained about moderate da'wah in the study of religious moderation at the IUQI Bogor student pesantren.

Moderate preaching in the study of religious moderation at the IUQI Bogor student pesantren, provides insight so that students are inclusive, which means that they can respect differences, promote dialogue and mutual tolerance and respect for all parties, and reject the attitude of imposing their will on others, especially with blind fanaticism and it is also hoped that students can have views or attitudes that try to find a middle ground between two conflicting and extreme views, so that no one view controls one's thoughts and behavior. Thus, a moderate Muslim is a figure who is always able to evaluate problems objectively and logically.



Picture of Religious Moderation Activity Implementation

Then, the da'wah materials presented in the study of religious moderation in the IUQI Bogor student pesantren also not only discuss religious issues, but also discuss issues regarding nationalism, then problems that occur in Muslims, especially in Indonesia. So it is hoped that students will have a view of the very complex problems of Muslims and later be able to provide answers to the problems of these problems.

### **Purpose and System of Organizing Religious Moderation Studies at the IUQI Bogor Student Boarding School**

In a follow-up interview with ustadz Irwan Maulana as the head of religious moderation at the IUQI Bogor student pesantren, he said that the purpose of organizing religious moderation at the IUQI Bogor student pesantren is so that students can think critically and can develop themselves, especially in terms of literacy. Then the purpose of organizing religious moderation in the IUQI Bogor student pesantren is to educate the nation's children, as stated in the preamble of the 1945 basic law, and one of the derivatives of law number 20 of 2023, namely the development of the potential of students to become human beings of faith and piety.

The implementation of religious moderation in the IUQI Bogor student pesantren is also in line with the government program in Presidential Regulation (Perpres) number 58 of 2023 concerning strengthening religious moderation and the Ministry of Religion in Minister of Religion Regulation No. 3 of 2024 concerning procedures for coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the implementation of strengthening religious moderation. This is the purpose of the implementation of religious moderation in the IUQI Bogor student pesantren.

Regarding the study system of religious moderation, ustadz Irwan Maulana said that the study system is a discussion system between the speaker and the students, conducted 2 weeks once every Saturday night. The speakers are usually filled by structural lecturers on the campus of the Ummul Quro Al-Islami Bogor Institute.

### **About IUQI Bogor Student Boarding School**

Institut Ummul Quro Al-Islami Bogor, or often called the Aswaja campus, has an institution designed to foster students in shaping the character of the younger generation, namely the Student Pesantren (Pesma).

Student boarding schools are the choice of many parents to provide holistic education to their children who are entering adulthood. Through the existence of student pesantren, students are expected to develop as a whole, including intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. Thus, students not only excel in the academic field, but also have high spiritual depth.

This student pesantren offers two main programs, namely the tafaquh and tahfidz programs. In the tahfidz program, students are expected to become hafidz/hafidzah who are proficient in memorizing the Qur'an and always practice it in their daily lives. Meanwhile, the tafaquh program aims to shape them into fiqh experts, preachers, and preachers. With a regular and tight schedule, the mahasantri utilize their time for productive activities. From morning to noon, they focus on the study of yellow books and memorizing the Qur'an, then continue their lectures on campus until Maghrib time. After college, they return to continue their pesantren activities until they finish.

Every activity in this Student Islamic Boarding School is expected to be a valuable provision for students when they enter the community. "I hope to produce students who not only excel in academics, but also in memorizing the Qur'an and understanding the yellow classical books. Pesma is an additional facility outside campus academic activities to study the yellow book and tahfidz," said Ustadz Mamduh, Director of Pesma. He also added, "The privilege for those who choose to join the Student Islamic Boarding School is the opportunity to gain additional knowledge, both about the yellow book and memorizing the Qur'an. While ordinary students only focus on courses according to their majors, Pesma students benefit by studying yellow books that are not taught in campus lectures," he said.



## Conclusion

The concept of moderation teaches the importance of mutual respect for differences, as well as openness in accepting diversity, be it in terms of mazhab or religion. These differences should not be a barrier to building cooperation based on human values.

In the midst of diversity and very complex problems that occur in society, pesantren as a center of religious education long before independence must be at the forefront of applying this concept of religious moderation. One of the pesantren that applies the concept of religious moderation is the IUQI Bogor student pesantren. As stated by the head of the religious moderation of the IUQI Bogor student pesantren, ustadz Irwan Maulana, that religious moderation must be applied in this student pesantren because this is in line with the government program through the Ministry of Religion regarding religious moderation and it is hoped that students can respect differences, promote dialogue and mutual tolerance and respect for all parties, and reject the attitude of imposing their will on others, especially with blind fanaticism.

In the end, students at the IUQI Bogor student pesantren can have a view of the very complex problems of Muslims and later be able to provide answers to the problems of these problems.

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