

## **Strengthening the Understanding of Religious Moderation among Students at Pondok Pesantren Daarul Falahiyyah, Cisoka District, Tangerang Regency**

**Ahmad Khunaepi<sup>1</sup> and Dul Jalil<sup>2</sup>**

*\* Correspondence Author: [khunaepi18@gmail.com](mailto:khunaepi18@gmail.com)*

<sup>1,2</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Syari'ah Nahdlatul Ulama Nusantara, Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia

### **INDEXING**

#### **Keywords:**

Keyword 1; Religious moderation

Keyword 2; Santri

Keyword 3; Pesantren

Keyword 4; Tolerance

Keyword 5; Strengthening

### **ABSTRACT**

This research activity aims to strengthen the understanding of religious moderation among students at the Daarul Falahiyyah Islamic Boarding School in Cisoka District, Tangerang Regency. Religious moderation is crucial in the context of Indonesia's diverse religious life, so that the values of tolerance, justice, and balance can be maintained and practiced. Islamic boarding schools, as traditional religious educational institutions, have a strategic role in instilling these values in students. This activity was carried out in the form of a seminar and interactive discussion involving 60 students as active participants. The seminar was held in August 2025 and focused on strengthening the concepts of religious moderation, such as tawassuth (middle-mannerism), tasamuh (tolerance), i'tidal (justice), and shura (deliberation). The implementation method prioritized a participatory approach so that students could engage in dialogue and think critically about the socio-religious realities they face. The results of the activity showed an increase in students' understanding of the importance of being moderate in religious and social life. This community service is expected to make a tangible contribution to developing an inclusive, tolerant, and patriotic young generation of Muslims. By actively involving Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), this activity also serves as an initial step toward mainstreaming religious moderation in grassroots Islamic educational institutions.

### **Article History**

Received : 30 August 2025 ; Revised : 15 September 2025 ; Accepted : 28 September 2025

Publish : 05 October 2025

## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is a country known for its ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity. This diversity represents both a wealth and a challenge in maintaining national unity. In the context of religious life, this diversity presents a unique challenge in building a harmonious life amidst differences in belief. Therefore, it is crucial to continue fostering moderate and tolerant religious attitudes, both within the general public and in religious educational settings, including Islamic boarding schools (pesantren).

Religious moderation is a concept that refers to religious attitudes that are not extreme, either toward liberalism or radicalism. This attitude emphasizes the importance of balance, justice, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society (Maslan, 2024). In the Indonesian context, religious moderation is a strategic approach to preventing the growth of intolerant and anti-diversity religious ideologies. The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has also made religious moderation a national priority program (Efendi, 2024).

As traditional religious educational institutions in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) play a crucial and strategic role in shaping the character and religious understanding of the younger generation. They serve not only as places to study religious knowledge but also as platforms for fostering life values that uphold humanity, brotherhood, and nationalism. Therefore, they play a key role in cultivating and strengthening the values of religious moderation among their students.

However, in reality, some Islamic boarding school students (santri) still understand religion textually and narrowly, ignoring the social, cultural, and national context. This can open the way for exclusive, intolerant, and even radical attitudes to develop. Furthermore, in the current digital era, Islamic boarding school students have easy access to a variety of religious information that may not align with the spirit of Islam, a blessing for all the worlds. Therefore, concrete and systematic efforts are needed to strengthen the understanding of religious moderation within Islamic boarding schools.

This research activity took place at the Daarul Falahiyyah Islamic Boarding School in Cisoka District, Tangerang Regency. This Islamic boarding school is one of the most active and growing Islamic educational institutions in Tangerang Regency. With a large number of students from diverse social backgrounds, this Islamic boarding school is an ideal place to instill and strengthen the values of religious moderation.

A total of 60 students from various levels of education at this Islamic boarding school participated in this community service activity. They are students who actively participate in teaching and learning activities and play a vital role in the Islamic boarding school community. It is hoped that through this activity, they will not only understand the concept of religious moderation theoretically but also be able to internalize and practice it in their daily lives, both within the Islamic boarding school and within the community.

This activity is designed with a participatory approach, where students are not only objects but also subjects in the learning process. This approach is implemented through interactive lectures, group discussions, case study simulations, and collaborative reflection. The material presented covers the basic concepts of religious moderation, indicators of moderation, examples of how moderation is applied in everyday life, as well as the challenges and strategies for building a moderate religious life in society.

This method is expected to encourage students to actively engage, think critically, and engage in open dialogue about their religious experiences, enabling them to understand that differences are not to be contested, but rather to be appreciated and managed wisely. Values such as tolerance (tasamuh), balance (tawazun), justice (i'tidal), and deliberation (shura) are emphasized as essential principles in fostering a moderate attitude.

This research is also expected to serve as a model for replication by other Islamic boarding schools in Tangerang Regency and the surrounding area. With simple, contextual, and applicable methods, strengthening religious moderation can be carried out sustainably and reach more students in various Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, the role of teachers, ustadz, and pesantren supervisors is also crucial in assisting students in internalizing these values in their daily lives.

To strengthen and sustain the program, synergy is needed between academics, education practitioners, religious leaders, and the government to build a welcoming, tolerant, and inclusive religious education ecosystem. Universities, as centers of knowledge and research, have a moral responsibility to directly participate in the process

of social transformation through community service activities like this. Meanwhile, Islamic boarding schools, as centers of traditional Islamic education, must be open to social dynamics and the challenges of the times.

Ultimately, this community service activity aims not only to provide a theoretical understanding of religious moderation, but also to encourage students to become active participants in building a peaceful religious life, respecting differences, and upholding humanitarian values. The hope is that students from the Daarul Falahiyyah Islamic Boarding School can serve as role models and inspiration for other young people in implementing religious moderation in real life.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Strengthening religious moderation also has a strong national dimension (Jamaluddin, 2022). As Indonesian citizens, Islamic boarding school students are expected not only to possess sound religious knowledge but also to possess a strong sense of national awareness (Azizah, 2021). Religious moderation in the Indonesian context is inseparable from a spirit of patriotism, maintaining the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and respecting the law and the constitution (Ainah and Iderus, 2023). Therefore, this activity also emphasized that being a moderate Islamic boarding school student means being a good and responsible citizen.

In recent years, numerous cases of intolerance and religious-based violence have emerged in society. This demonstrates that the challenges of building a harmonious religious life remain significant (Haryani, 2019). Education that emphasizes an understanding of moderation is one long-term solution to prevent the growth of extremism and radicalism (Siregar et al., 2025).

Furthermore, strengthening religious moderation aligns with the vision of character education, currently a primary government priority. Character education grounded in moderate religious values will produce a younger generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually mature (Rizwadi et al., 2023). As a group of students with a strong religious foundation, Islamic boarding school students have the potential to become agents of change in society if equipped with a balanced and contextual understanding.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This activity took the form of an interactive seminar designed to encourage active participation from students. The seminar took place in August 2025 at the Daarul Falahiyyah Islamic Boarding School in Cisoka District, Tangerang Regency, and was attended by 60 students as the main participants.

The methods used in the activities included lectures, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and case studies. The material focused on strengthening the values of religious moderation, such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), balance (*tawazun*), justice (*i'tidal*), and the importance of deliberation (*shura*) in social life. The speakers were academics and local religious leaders with a deep understanding of the concept of religious moderation and practical experience in instilling these values in society.

The activities take place in a dialogic and open atmosphere, allowing students to express their views, experiences, and questions about religious and social life in the Islamic boarding school and the wider community. Through this participatory approach,

students not only gain cognitive knowledge but also internalize values and attitudes that foster social harmony, empathy between religious communities, and moral responsibility as citizens who uphold diversity.

Furthermore, the approach employed emphasizes the importance of critical and reflective thinking on various contemporary religious issues, such as the potential for radicalism, intolerance, and the misuse of religious teachings. Students are encouraged to understand that moderation does not mean obscuring religious teachings, but rather a wise way to maintain the purity of Islamic teachings so that they remain relevant to the complex and pluralistic context of modern life. With the students' active involvement in discussions and case studies, this activity serves not only as a one-way means of conveying information but also as a collaborative learning space that sparks collective awareness of the importance of making religious moderation part of everyday religious identity and practice. This is part of a long-term effort to strengthen the ideological resilience of Islamic boarding schools against the negative influences of extreme and intolerant ideologies.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

An interactive seminar held in August 2025 had a positive impact on improving students' understanding and shaping their attitudes toward the values of religious moderation. The event, held at the Daarul Falahiyyah Islamic Boarding School in Cisoka District, Tangerang Regency, was attended by 60 students who actively participated in each seminar session. The implementation method, which involved lectures, questions and answers, group discussions, and case studies, proved effective in stimulating students' cognitive and affective engagement.

Based on direct observations during the activity and the results of simple pre- and post-test evaluations, a significant improvement in the students' understanding of key concepts in religious moderation was evident. Terms such as *tawassuth* (middle stance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *i'tidal* (justice), and *shura* (deliberation) were not only understood theoretically but also began to be internalized in the students' thinking and responses to religious issues.

Changes were evident not only in cognitive understanding but also in attitudes. The students demonstrated greater openness and tolerance toward differing religious views, including in discussions about differences in schools of thought and the diversity of religious practices in society. This was evident in their increased participation in discussions and their courage to express their views in a polite and open manner. This attitude is an important indicator of the successful internalization of the value of religious moderation.

Furthermore, the students demonstrated sensitivity to emerging socio-religious issues, particularly those related to intolerance, radicalism, and the spread of hate speech through social media. In the case study session, many participants provided critical analyses of the phenomenon of extremism and offered solutions based on Islamic values, a blessing for all. Furthermore, national values were also an important part of this activity. The students began to understand that religious moderation is closely linked to the spirit of maintaining the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). They recognized that a balanced and tolerant religious attitude is a real contribution to maintaining social harmony in a pluralistic society.

Overall, this seminar succeeded in becoming an effective learning medium, not only in improving conceptual understanding, but also in shaping the character of students as agents of moderation who are ready to face the challenges of the times with a wise and open attitude.

### **1. Pesantren or Islamic Boarding Schools as Strategic Agents of Religious Moderation**

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) hold a unique position in Indonesia's educational ecosystem, as they not only impart religious knowledge textually but also shape the character and morals of their students through the instilling of life values. In the context of strengthening religious moderation, pesantren can serve as a safe space for students to openly discuss, without pressure, differences in schools of thought, religious views, and current socio-religious phenomena. The presence of kiai (Islamic scholars), ustadz (Islamic teachers), and pesantren supervisors as respected, authoritative figures also strengthens the effectiveness of pesantren in instilling peaceful, tolerant, and nationalistic Islamic values.

In this regard, Daarul Falahiyyah Islamic Boarding School (PPD) is able to provide an open and inclusive educational atmosphere. Students are not merely objects of da'wah (Islamic outreach) but also active subjects in the learning process, engaging in critical yet respectful dialogue when addressing religious issues.

### **2. Improved Conceptual Understanding**

The students demonstrated a significant increase in their understanding of basic terms and principles of religious moderation, such as tawassuth (middle path), tasamuh (tolerance), i'tidal (justice), and shura (deliberation). This indicator was clearly evident during the group discussion sessions, where participants were able not only to define these terms but also to relate them to their social context and daily experiences, both within the pesantren and the surrounding community.

Pre- and post-test results conducted before and after the seminar showed an increase in the average understanding scores of the participants. For example, in the pre-test, only about 35% of students could correctly identify the meaning of tawassuth, while in the post-test, that number increased to 82%. A similar increase occurred for the concept of tasamuh, from 40% to 88%, and for the concepts of i'tidal and shura, each of which more than doubled. (This data can be seen in Table 1).

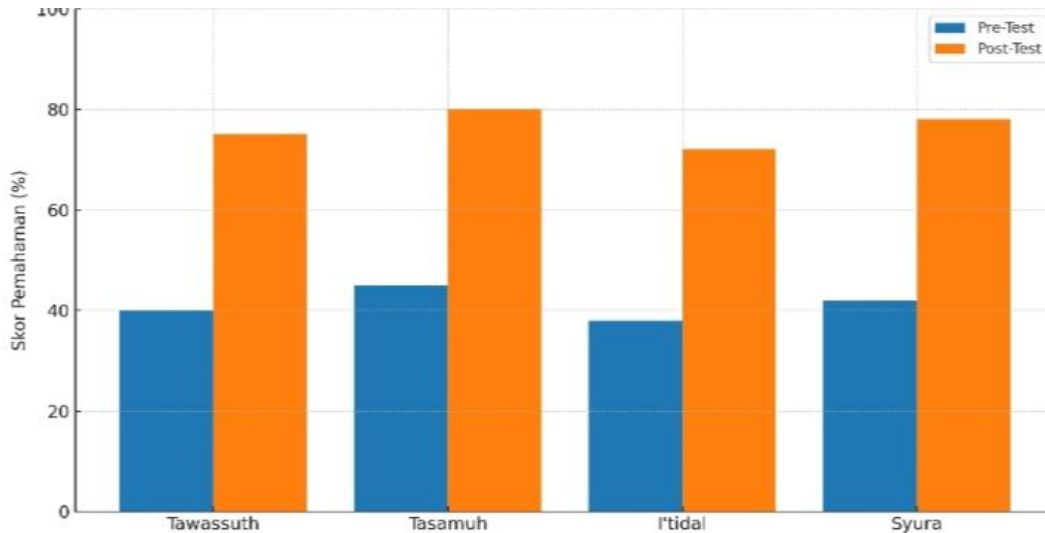
**Table 1. Increasing Students' Understanding of the Principles of Religious Moderation**

<b>Aspects of the moderation concept</b>	<b>Understanding before the seminar (%)</b>	<b>Understanding after seminar (%)</b>
Tawasuth (middle way)	50%	82%
Tasamuh (tolerance)	48%	85%
I'tidal (Justice)	45%	78%
Syura (deliberation)	42%	76%

Moderation and nationality	40%	80%
----------------------------	-----	-----

Source: Author (2025)

Table 1 Description: This table shows a significant increase in students' understanding of key concepts in religious moderation after attending the seminar. For example, understanding of tasamuh increased from 50% to 85%, while understanding of the relationship between moderation and Indonesianness rose from 40% to 80%.



**Figure 1. Results of visualization before and after the seminar**  
Source: Author (2025)

### 3. Changes in Attitude and Open-Mindedness

In terms of attitudes and acceptance of values, the students demonstrated significant enthusiasm and openness to diverse perspectives in religious life. The interactive seminar successfully encouraged them to be more confident in expressing their opinions, especially when discussing religious issues that had previously been considered sensitive. They began to express their views on differences in Islamic schools of thought, the importance of interfaith dialogue, and the urgency of avoiding exclusivity and self-righteousness in understanding Islamic teachings.

Before the seminar, most students tended to be passive and simply accepted religious doctrine without any room for questioning or dialogue. However, after participating in the discussion sessions and case studies presented using a participatory approach, the students demonstrated a shift in attitude from being closed to being more inclusive and reflective. They began to realize that differences of opinion in Islam are inevitable and should be respected, not contested.

This was reflected in their courage in responding to various religious scenarios simulated by the presenters, as well as in developing dialogical and tolerant arguments. For example, when discussing the issue of interfaith relations, the majority of students agreed that maintaining harmonious relations with followers of other faiths is part of the teachings of Islam, which is rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe). Others also shared their personal experiences interacting with friends of different faiths in the

community, which they had never before reflected deeply on within the framework of religious moderation.

Furthermore, their attitudes toward extreme religious narratives have also changed. Students have become more sensitive and critical of religious teachings that are exclusive, divisive, or claim absolute truth unilaterally. They have begun to demonstrate the ability to objectively assess a viewpoint and consider social benefits when adopting a religious stance.

Thus, it can be concluded that this activity not only provides cognitive understanding but also touches on the affective and moral aspects of the students, which are crucial in internalizing the values of religious moderation into everyday life. This change in attitude is a significant starting point in shaping the students as agents of change capable of spreading the message of a friendly, peaceful, and compassionate Islam within the community.

## 2. Critical Response to Current Religious Issues

This activity also stimulates students to be more critical in responding to extreme, intolerant, or provocative religious phenomena. Through case studies and group discussions, participants can identify the characteristics of religious beliefs that deviate from the values of Islam, a mercy for all the worlds. They also recognize the importance of students' role as ambassadors of peace and guardians of social harmony in society, as shown in the following table 2. This table shows that the majority of Islamic boarding school students (santri) responded positively to current religious issues. Eighty-five percent expressed concern about hate speech on social media and chose to remain neutral and wise. Meanwhile, 78% rejected interfaith intolerance as part of practicing peaceful and inclusive Islamic values.

**Table 2. Student Responses to Current Religious Issues**

<b>Current religious issues</b>	<b>Percentage of responsive students {%}</b>	<b>The form of response shown</b>
Inter-religious intolerance	78%	Rejecting discriminatory actions
Hate speech on social media	85%	Recognizing the negative impact and choosing neutrality
Religious-based extremism	70%	Criticizing and promoting dialogue
Religious provocation ahead of the election	67%	Supports stability and unity
Claims of sole truth between schools of thought	78%	Respecting differences and choosing dialogue

Source: Author (2025)

## 5. Strengthening National and Indonesian Values

The follow-up plan for the community service activity themed "Fostering Religious Diversity Education: Improving Moderate Religious Literacy Among Gen-Z Muslim Students in Tangerang City" focuses on strengthening the internal capacity of schools and

student communities so that the program does not stop at a temporary activity. Initial steps designed include the formation of a School Moderation Team (TMS) involving teachers, the Student Council (OSIS), and students as the main implementers of the diversity literacy program. This activity is supported by the integration of moderation materials into extracurricular activities such as Rohis and Scouts, the development of Gen-Z-based digital modules, and ToT (Training of Trainers) training for students and teachers to become religious moderation trainers in other schools.

To expand reach and ensure sustainability, digital content creation by students through social media, the "Ngaji Wasatiyah Bareng Gen-Z" forum, and collaboration with the Tangerang City Education Office and Ministry of Religious Affairs to encourage program replication in other schools are also planned. Periodic monitoring and evaluation processes are conducted through attitude surveys, activity documentation, and student-teacher reflections, and culminate in the compilation of a book of student moderation experiences as a public literacy medium. Thus, this program is expected to not only impact individuals but also become part of the transformation of an inclusive religious culture in Tangerang City schools.



**Figure 2 Resource persons and students during an interactive discussion**  
Source: Author (2025)



**Figure 3. Joint commitment to maintaining tolerance between religious communities**  
Source: Author (2025)



## CONCLUSION

The community service activity with the theme "Fostering Religious Diversity Education: Improving Wasatiyah Religious Literacy Among Gen-Z Muslim Students in Tangerang City" demonstrated that strengthening the values of religious moderation is highly relevant and necessary in the context of a multicultural urban society like Tangerang City. Through a participatory approach and the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method, this activity successfully identified local potential, built an inclusive diversity dialogue, and raised students' awareness of the importance of wasatiyah (moderate) attitudes in religious and social life.

This program not only provides a conceptual understanding of a friendly and tolerant Islam but also encourages students to become agents of peace through reflective, creative, and digital media-based activities. Student enthusiasm, teacher involvement, and local community support are crucial for the program's sustainability. Although challenges such as digital identity polarization, limited policy support, and the lack of a robust sustainability structure remain, this program has created space for positive transformation. Therefore, efforts to promote moderate religious literacy need to continue to be developed collaboratively and systematically to create a tolerant, peaceful, and civilized educational ecosystem among the younger generation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With deep gratitude, we extend our deepest gratitude to all parties who have provided support and contributions to the implementation of this community service activity. We extend our thanks to the partner schools, the Islamic Religious Education teachers, the Gen-Z students who have enthusiastically participated, and the school committees who have supported the implementation of this program. We also express our deep appreciation to the Tangerang City Education Office, the Tangerang City Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, and the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) for providing direction, facilities, and policy legitimacy. We also extend our gratitude to the entire student team and volunteers involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating this program for their extraordinary dedication and collaborative work. May this joint effort become a continuous charity and continue to benefit the realization of a moderate, tolerant, and civilized educational ecosystem in Tangerang City.

## REFERENCES

### Dissertation from a Database

Efendi, E. (2024). *Implementasi Pemahaman Moderasi Beragama Pada Pembelajaran Aqidah Akhlak Di Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Se Kabupaten Siak* (Doctoral Dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau).

### Journal articles

Ainah, N., & Iderus, M. H. S. (2023). Revitalisasi Cinta Tanah Air Dalam Mengembangkan Moderasi Beragama. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, 1(2), 175-190.

Haryani, E. (2019). Intoleransi dan resistensi masyarakat terhadap kemajemukan: studi kasus kerukunan beragama di kota Bogor, Jawa Barat. *Harmoni*, 18(2), 73-90.

- Jamaluddin, J. (2022). Implementasi Moderasi Beragama Di Tengah Multikulturalitas Indonesia. *As-Salam: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 7(1), 1-13.
- Rizwadi, R., Roibin, R., Mustofa, L., Barizi, A., & Jamilah, J. (2023). Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Moderasi Beragama pada Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah di Kota Samarinda. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 12(04).
- Siregar, H. Y., Akbar, F., Harahap, A. P., & Nazmi, K. (2025). Hadis Sebagai Pilar Deradikalisasi di Indonesia: Analisis Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam. *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan dan Kemasyarakatan*, 19(1), 621-639.

### **Proceedings**

- Azizah, I. (2021). Peran Santri Milenial dalam Mewujudkan Moderasi Beragama. *Prosiding Nasional*, 4, 197-216.
- Maslan, D. (2024). Konsep Moderasi Beragama Dalam Perspektif Wahdatul ‘Ulum dan Maqashid al-Syari’ah: Upaya Mencegah Radikalisme dan Liberalisme di Dunia Pendidikan. *Book Chapter of Proceedings Journey-Liaison Academia and Society*, 1(1), 389-410.