

Religious Moderation at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School: Strategies for Implementing Tarbiah Through the Application of Islamic Values in Fostering Harmony

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received: June 4, 2026 Revised: June 18, 2026 Accepted: June 23, 2026 Keywords: Religious moderation, Islamic boarding school, Catur Piwulang, Islamic values, Harmony	ABSTRACT Indonesia faces significant challenges in maintaining religious harmony amid its diverse religious landscape, with Islam as the majority religion, and Islamic boarding schools play a crucial role in fostering religious moderation. This community service article aims to analyze the strategies implemented by Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat in Lamongan, East Java, in implementing religious moderation through the application of Islamic values. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques including observation, in-depth interviews with kyai, teachers, and students, as well as documentation studies conducted from January to June 2026. The findings reveal three main strategies: institutional modernization through infrastructure development and student-centered learning methodologies; value internalization through the study of classical Sufism texts and habituation practices such as ro'an, halaqah, and bahtsul masa'il; and implementation of inclusive public ethics based on the Catur Piwulang philosophy. Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat successfully demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools can serve as effective agents of religious moderation through adaptive institutional transformation, integrated value systems, and inclusive public ethics.
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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with unique yet challenging diversity. In terms of religious belief, the nation officially recognizes six religions with Islam as the absolute majority at 87.2%, followed by Protestant Christianity (6.9%), Catholicism (2.9%), Hinduism (1.7%), Buddhism (0.7%), and Confucianism (0.05%) (Haluti et al., 2025). Although these figures reflect the richness of national identity, the reality on the ground shows that differences in belief often trigger social tensions that spill over into political and economic domains. Imbalances in policy implementation and colonial legacies concerning the dominance of certain cultures create feelings of marginalization among minorities, which further reinforces narratives of conflict and injustice (Walad et al., 2024). Research has shown that countries with high religious diversity face greater challenges in maintaining social cohesion, particularly when majority-minority relations are not managed through inclusive policies (Burga & Damopolii, 2022).

The dichotomy between Muslims and non-Muslims often remains at the root of socio-political tensions within society. Given Islam's position as the majority and the existence of conservative groups still inclined toward exclusivity in responding to currents of moderation, this situation creates significant challenges in realizing substantive harmony in Indonesia. The current Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr. H. Yaqut Cholil Qoumas,

emphasized that religious conflicts frequently occurring in Indonesia are generally triggered by exclusive attitudes and competition among religious groups in gaining support without being grounded in mutual tolerance, ultimately creating divisions among religious communities. He stated that religious moderation efforts should not only mean interreligious relations but also extend to the internal level of each religious community (Saragih, 2021). This perspective aligns with global discussions on preventing violent extremism through education (Fatih, 2024).

In facing these dynamics, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a crucial role in shaping the character of the younger generation to prevent them from being trapped in extremism currents. In Indonesia, PAI is not merely a transfer of formal doctrine but serves as a primary foundation for developing religious moderation attitudes. Global challenges in the form of polarization demand an inclusive religious education system capable of appreciating diversity as a divine provision (Alsi, 2025). Therefore, improving the quality of Islamic education is a concrete manifestation of efforts to achieve public awareness of the importance of religious moderation. Studies indicate that educational institutions with multicultural approaches demonstrate better outcomes in fostering tolerance among students from diverse backgrounds (Malik et al., 2025).

The partner institution in this community service activity is Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat (PPSD), located in Lamongan, East Java. Established in 1977, PPSD carries a historical, psychological, and philosophical mission rooted in the da'wah struggle of Sunan Drajat or Raden Qasim on the northern coast of Java (Ulum & Mun'im, 2024). Based on initial observations and interviews conducted with the pesantren leadership, several key problems were identified: (1) the challenge of maintaining the pesantren's traditional identity while adapting to modern educational demands; (2) the need to develop an inclusive curriculum that accommodates students from diverse regional and cultural backgrounds; (3) the necessity of providing students with practical skills for engaging with a pluralistic society beyond the pesantren walls; and (4) the absence of a systematic documentation of the pesantren's strategies in fostering religious moderation, which could serve as a model for other institutions.

What makes PPSD particularly relevant as a partner is its unique approach to religious moderation. Unlike many pesantren that limit their curriculum to conventional Islamic studies, PPSD combines modern infrastructure development with multicultural education based on local culture, Sufi orders (tarekat), and even the integration of digital technology (Syahrin et al., 2024). The pesantren possesses three strategic assets: a large number of students as agents of moderation, its institutional position as a social bridge for surrounding communities, and the capacity to implement a refined and moderate curriculum (Fatih, 2024). However, real challenges remain; approximately 50% of pesantren in Indonesia are found to still use curricula that tend toward exclusivity (Malik et al., 2025). This situation ultimately becomes a weakness of pesantren education in the current era, as radicalism often emerges from superficial understanding of religious texts in isolation and separation of text from its spiritual context (Rusmiati et al., 2022).

The novelty of this community service activity lies in the comprehensive documentation and analysis of PPSD's integrative model of religious moderation, which combines institutional modernization, value internalization through intellectual-spiritual traditions, and inclusive public ethics based on the Catur Piwulang philosophy. While numerous studies have discussed religious moderation in pesantren generally, few have provided a systematic analysis of how a single institution successfully integrates these three dimensions in a coherent and replicable manner. Furthermore, the unique aspect of PPSD's approach—incorporating cross-cultural arts such as Barongsai (Chinese lion dance) alongside traditional Islamic practices—offers a distinctive contribution to the discourse on Islamic education and interfaith harmony.

This community service activity aims to document, analyze, and disseminate the strategies employed by Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat in implementing religious moderation through the application of Islamic values. The urgency of this activity lies in the pressing need for concrete models of religious moderation that can be adopted by other Islamic educational institutions across

Indonesia. Given the escalating tensions and instances of religious intolerance in various regions, the PPSD model offers a practical and proven approach to fostering harmony through educational transformation. It is expected that the findings of this activity will contribute to the development of more responsive Islamic religious education policies and practices that address the realities of Indonesia's pluralistic society.

PROBLEMS

Based on observations and interviews conducted with the leadership, teachers, and students of Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat (PPSD) from January to June 2026, several factual and current issues were identified that challenge the pesantren's efforts in implementing religious moderation:

First, the challenge of balancing tradition and modernity. PPSD, like many traditional pesantren, faces the dilemma of preserving its classical Islamic identity while adapting to contemporary educational demands. The pesantren's curriculum includes the study of classical texts (*kitab kuning*) such as *Ihya' Ulumuddin* and *Durrotun Nashihin*, alongside modern subjects. However, there is constant tension between maintaining the depth of traditional Islamic scholarship and meeting the expectations of parents and students for modern, market-relevant skills. This challenge is compounded by the perception among some conservative Islamic circles that modernization represents a dilution of Islamic values (Bakhrudin, 2024).

Second, the diversity of student backgrounds. PPSD hosts students (*santri*) from various regions across Indonesia, each bringing distinct cultural traditions, dialects, and levels of religious understanding. While this diversity is a strength, it also presents challenges in creating a unified educational experience that respects individual differences while instilling shared values of moderation and tolerance. Differences in character, cultural background, and regional origin among *santri* serve as a medium for absorbing tolerance values through intensive daily interactions, but also require deliberate management to prevent misunderstandings or conflicts (Ulum & Mun'im, 2023).

Third, the need for practical skills for a pluralistic society. Beyond theoretical knowledge of Islamic values, *santri* must be equipped with practical skills to navigate the complexities of Indonesia's pluralistic society. This includes the ability to engage in interfaith dialogue, collaborate with people of different religious backgrounds, and apply Islamic ethical principles in diverse social and professional contexts. The pesantren's economic units—which include various business enterprises employing both Muslim and non-Muslim personnel—serve as important laboratories for this practical learning, but require continuous development to maximize their educational potential (Salsabilla, 2024).

Fourth, the absence of systematic documentation. Despite its impressive achievements in fostering religious harmony, PPSD lacks systematic documentation of its strategies, methods, and outcomes. This represents a missed opportunity for knowledge sharing and institutional learning. A structured documentation of the pesantren's approach to religious moderation would not only benefit PPSD itself but also serve as a valuable reference for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to enhance their own moderation efforts.

Fifth, external pressures and societal expectations. As a prominent pesantren, PPSD faces expectations from various stakeholders—including government authorities, religious organizations, and the general public—regarding its role in promoting religious moderation. This includes pressures to demonstrate concrete outcomes in countering extremism and fostering interreligious harmony. The pesantren must navigate these external expectations while maintaining its autonomy and core mission (Rusmiati et al., 2022).

These problems require comprehensive solutions that address both the internal dynamics of the pesantren and its relationship with the broader society. The community service activity described in this article focuses on documenting and analyzing PPSD's existing strategies while also providing recommendations for strengthening its religious moderation efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity employed multiple complementary methods to address the problems, challenges, and issues identified at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat. The selection of methods was guided by the nature of the problems and the need for comprehensive solutions that involve various stakeholders. The implementation was conducted over a six-month period from January to June 2026 at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat, located in Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia.

The community education method was utilized for activities aimed at increasing understanding and awareness of religious moderation among pesantren stakeholders. A series of training and counseling sessions were conducted for teachers on integrating religious moderation values into their teaching practices, covering topics such as developing inclusive curricula, handling sensitive religious topics in the classroom, and fostering interfaith dialogue skills among students. These sessions were delivered through a combination of lectures, group discussions, and case-based learning. Additionally, in-house training was provided for pesantren administrators on institutional policies that support religious moderation, including developing codes of conduct that promote tolerance, creating safe spaces for interfaith discussions, and establishing partnerships with non-Muslim communities and organizations.

The training method was employed for activities involving counseling on the substance of religious moderation accompanied by demonstrations or pilot projects for its realization. Students received training in interfaith dialogue skills, where they were taught effective communication techniques for engaging with people of different religious backgrounds through role-playing exercises, simulation of interfaith meetings, and practical guidance on addressing common misconceptions about Islam. Furthermore, based on PPSD's existing economic units, entrepreneurship and business management training was provided to senior students, with emphasis on applying Islamic ethical principles in professional settings and encouraging collaboration with partners from diverse backgrounds.

The science and technology diffusion method was used for activities that produced products for consumers, specifically in documenting and disseminating PPSD's religious moderation model. A systematic documentation framework was developed to record PPSD's strategies, activities, and outcomes in religious moderation, which included developing templates for recording interfaith activities, creating a digital archive of relevant documents and photographs, and establishing procedures for regular reporting. The findings of this community service activity were also prepared for publication in academic journals and presentations at conferences, while a simplified guidebook on PPSD's religious moderation strategies was developed for distribution to other pesantren and educational institutions.

The advocacy method was utilized for mentoring activities that support the pesantren's ongoing efforts in religious moderation. Ongoing mentoring was provided to PPSD's leadership and teachers in implementing religious moderation strategies through regular consultation sessions to discuss challenges, review progress, and adjust approaches as needed. Assistance was also provided in establishing and strengthening partnerships with interfaith organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions, which included facilitating connections with the "Beda tapi Mesra" interfaith forum and supporting the expansion of PPSD's interfaith dialogue activities.

Data for this community service activity were collected through multiple techniques to ensure comprehensive and reliable findings. Direct observation of activities at PPSD was conducted from January to June 2026, focusing on daily interactions among students and teachers, teaching and learning processes, extracurricular activities, and interfaith events. These observations were meticulously documented through field notes and photographs to capture both routine practices and special events. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including the leadership of PPSD, teachers from various subjects, students at different levels, and community members and partners involved in interfaith activities. These interviews

explored perceptions of religious moderation, implementation strategies, challenges faced, and perceived outcomes. Additionally, documentation studies were undertaken, wherein documents and records related to PPSD's religious moderation activities were collected and analyzed, including curriculum documents, activity reports, photographs, news articles, and other relevant materials.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative methods to derive meaningful insights from the collected information. Data reduction involved organizing, categorizing, and summarizing the collected data to identify key themes and patterns related to religious moderation strategies and outcomes. The findings were then presented in narrative form, supported by tables, figures, and direct quotations from interviews to illustrate key points and provide rich contextual understanding. Conclusion drawing and verification were carried out by drawing conclusions based on the analyzed data and verifying these findings through cross-checking with multiple sources, employing triangulation techniques, and conducting member checking with participants to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activities at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat revealed significant findings regarding the implementation of religious moderation through the application of Islamic values. These findings are organized into three main strategic approaches: institutional modernization, value internalization, and inclusive public ethics. Each of these approaches contributes uniquely to the pesantren's success in fostering religious harmony and moderate Islamic attitudes among its students and the broader community.

Institutional Modernization as a Foundation for Religious Moderation

Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat has undergone impressive modernization, both in terms of infrastructure and learning methodologies. This transformation, initiated under the leadership of KH. Abdul Ghofur, represents a fundamental shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning approaches, providing opportunities for students to creatively explore their potential (Bakhrudin, 2024). The modernization efforts encompass infrastructure development, curriculum integration, and pedagogical innovation, all of which work in concert to create an educational environment that is both rooted in Islamic tradition and responsive to contemporary needs.

The infrastructure development at PPSD has resulted in comprehensive facilities that support both religious and general education. Well-equipped classrooms, a library containing both classical texts and modern references, computer laboratories, and facilities for extracurricular activities all reflect a commitment to providing quality education that meets contemporary standards while maintaining Islamic identity. The physical environment itself communicates the pesantren's dedication to educational excellence and its openness to modern learning tools and methods.

Curriculum integration represents another crucial dimension of the modernization strategy. The pesantren has developed an integrated curriculum that combines classical Islamic studies, including the study of *Ihya' Ulumuddin* and *Durrotun Nashihin*, with modern academic subjects following national education standards. This curriculum also incorporates practical skills development through economic units and vocational training, alongside character education emphasizing religious moderation and tolerance. This integrated approach addresses the need for balanced education that prepares students for both spiritual and worldly success. As one teacher explained, "We want our students to be deeply rooted in Islamic tradition yet capable of engaging with the modern world. This is what makes them effective agents of moderation" (Interview, Ustaz Ahmad, March 15, 2026).

The shift toward student-centered learning methodologies has been particularly significant in the modernization process. Rather than being passive recipients of knowledge, students are encouraged to actively participate in discussions, ask questions, and explore topics independently.

This approach develops critical thinking skills that are essential for religious moderation, as students learn to evaluate different perspectives rather than simply accepting given interpretations. The transformation from teacher-centered to student-centered pedagogy represents a fundamental reorientation of the educational philosophy, one that empowers students to become active agents in their own learning and character development.

The modernization efforts at PPSD align with findings from other studies on pesantren development. Research by Syahrin et al. (2024) emphasizes that modern-traditional pesantren now combine formal curriculum with multicultural education based on local culture, Sufi orders, and digital technology integration. Similarly, Fatih (2024) identified three strategic assets of pesantren in promoting moderation: the large number of students as agents of moderation, the institution's position as a social bridge for surrounding communities, and the capacity to implement refined and moderate curricula. However, the modernization process has not been without challenges, as approximately fifty percent of pesantren in Indonesia are found to still use curricula that tend toward exclusivity (Malik et al., 2025). This highlights the importance of intentional efforts to develop inclusive approaches. At PPSD, the modernization strategy has been carefully implemented to avoid the pitfalls of superficial modernization that might compromise Islamic values. Instead, modernization is framed as a means of more effectively realizing Islamic teachings in contemporary contexts.

The significance of this modernization lies in its contribution to religious moderation. Modernized institutions with inclusive curricula and student-centered approaches are better positioned to foster tolerance and critical thinking. As research by Alsi (2025) indicates, inclusive religious education systems are essential for appreciating diversity as a divine provision. By modernizing its institutional structures and methodologies, PPSD has created an environment conducive to the development of moderate religious attitudes that prepare students for meaningful engagement in a pluralistic society.

Value Internalization Through Intellectual-Spiritual Traditions

The application of moderation values at PPSD occurs systematically through all dimensions of pesantren life. Religious moderation is not taught as a separate subject but is integrated into the curriculum, daily activities, and social relationship patterns between students and teachers (Maftuhah, 2026). This integration is achieved through classical text studies, traditional healing and spiritual practices, and daily habituation activities, all of which work together to create a comprehensive system of value internalization.

Classical text studies form a cornerstone of the value internalization process at PPSD. Values of tolerance and inclusivity are shaped by teachers through the study of classical Sufism texts that emphasize purity of heart and human ethics. The study of *Ihya' Ulumuddin* by Imam Al-Ghazali, for instance, provides students with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic spirituality that transcends legalistic interpretations. Similarly, *Durrotun Nashihin* offers guidance on ethical conduct and human relations. These texts serve as foundations for developing moderate religious attitudes that emphasize compassion, tolerance, and social responsibility. Through rigorous engagement with these classical works, students develop a nuanced understanding of Islamic teachings that balances legal obligations with spiritual and ethical considerations.

Traditional healing and spiritual practices represent another dimension of the intellectual-spiritual tradition at PPSD. The tradition of traditional healing or *suwuk* through the study of *Syamsul Ma'arif* creates a balance between textual reasoning and spiritual intuition (Ulum & Mun'im, 2023). By engaging with alternative healing practices alongside formal Islamic education, students develop a more holistic understanding of human well-being that encompasses physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. This integration of spiritual practice with textual study reflects the pesantren's commitment to developing students who are grounded in Islamic tradition yet open to diverse forms of knowledge and healing.

Daily habituation activities play a crucial role in value internalization at PPSD. Students

are taught through daily interactions involving various forms of value-laden habituation. Traditions such as ro'an, or mutual cooperation, halaqah discussion circles, bahtsul masa'il problem-solving forums for legal issues, and collective worship activities such as istighosah and manaqib serve as real laboratories for students to practice empathy and cooperation (Ulum & Mun'im, 2023). These habituations align with efforts to strengthen character education that makes religiosity the primary foundation for action. Table 1 below provides an overview of the value internalization activities at PPSD and the values they instill.

Tabel 1. Value Internalization Activities at PPSD

Activity	Description	Values Instilled
Kitab Kuning Study	Study of classical Islamic texts (Ihya' Ulumuddin, Durrotun Nashihin)	Tolerance, ethical understanding, spiritual depth
Suwuk/Healing Practice	Traditional healing through Syamsul Ma'arif study	Holistic well-being, balance of text and spirit
Ro'an (Mutual Cooperation)	Communal work activities within the pesantren	Cooperation, empathy, social responsibility
Halaqah (Discussion Circle)	Small group discussions on various topics	Critical thinking, respectful dialogue
Bahtsul Masa'il	Forum for discussing and solving legal issues	Problem-solving, collaborative learning
Istighosah and Manaqib	Collective worship and remembrance	Spiritual devotion, communal bonding

Through these intensive and inclusive interactions, students learn not only to accept differences of opinion within the pesantren but also to prepare themselves for engaging with pluralism beyond the pesantren walls. Research by Burga and Damopolii (2022) supports this approach, emphasizing that pesantren life represents a miniature society that enables students to simulate social adjustment before entering a wider environment. The differences in character, cultural background, and regional origin among students serve as a medium for absorbing tolerance values through intensive daily interactions that mirror the diversity of Indonesian society.

The value internalization approach at PPSD addresses the challenge of superficial religious understanding that can lead to extremism. Rusmiati et al. (2022) note that radicalism often emerges from shallow understanding of religious texts in isolation and separation of text from its spiritual context. By emphasizing both textual study and spiritual practice, PPSD develops students' capacity for nuanced, contextualized religious understanding that recognizes the complexity of human experience. This comprehensive approach to religious education ensures that students develop not only cognitive understanding of Islamic teachings but also the spiritual depth and

ethical sensitivity necessary for moderate religious practice.

Implementation of Inclusive Public Ethics Based on Catur Piwulang Philosophy

The ethical foundation for social interaction at PPSD is rooted in the noble teachings of Catur Piwulang, or the Four Teachings, of Sunan Drajat. This philosophy encompasses four pillars: providing a stick to the blind, providing food to the hungry, providing clothing to the unclothed, and providing shelter to those caught in rain. These four principles are not merely material metaphors but ethical commands to act inclusively in the public sphere to prevent domination or discrimination by one group against another (Safi'i & Chalim, 2024). The Catur Piwulang philosophy provides a comprehensive ethical framework that guides the pesantren's engagement with the broader community and its approach to fostering religious harmony.

Tabel 2. Catur Piwulang Philosophy and Its Implementation at PPSD

Philosophy Element	Literal Meaning	Ethical Interpretation	Implementation at PPSD
Teken (Stick)	Provide a stick to the blind	Give guidance to those in need	Educational programs, literacy initiatives
Mangan (Food)	Provide food to the hungry	Address material needs of others	Economic units, food assistance programs
Busono (Clothing)	Provide clothing to the unclothed	Respect human dignity	Outreach programs, social services
Payung (Umbrella)	Provide shelter to those caught in rain	Offer protection and support	Interfaith dialogue, community engagement

The concrete manifestation of Catur Piwulang philosophy is PPSD's openness to interfaith dialogue, reflected in the "Beda tapi Mesra" or Different but Friendly Forum. This forum serves as a regular meeting place for adherents of Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, and even followers of the Sapta Darma belief system. In this community, members prioritize a sense of family through sharing life experiences and engaging in meaningful dialogue across religious boundaries. The culmination of these activities is organized within PPSD's "Bumi Damai" or Peace Land environment, proving that the pesantren is willing to be a welcoming host for diversity, dismantling the stigma of radicalism through concrete practices of interreligious harmony (Redaksi Majalah Menara, 2024).

The interfaith forum represents a significant departure from conventional pesantren practices. Rather than limiting interaction to fellow Muslims, PPSD actively engages with people of different faiths in meaningful dialogue that builds understanding and trust across religious communities. This approach aligns with global discussions on interfaith engagement as a strategy for preventing violent extremism and fostering social cohesion. Research by Walad et al. (2024) emphasizes that Indonesia's religious diversity, while challenging, provides opportunities for developing inclusive approaches to religious coexistence that can serve as models for other pluralistic societies.

Beyond spiritual and educational pathways, PPSD implements religious moderation through an open and self-reliant economic system. Under the leadership of KH. Abdul Ghofur,

PPSD has transformed into an entrepreneurial pesantren that involves students and the community broadly without regard to religious differences. This transformation is driven by the mandate "Wenehono," meaning Give, which inspires the pesantren to help marginalized groups and build national self-reliance through economic empowerment that transcends religious boundaries.

PPSD manages various business units diversified into industrial, service, and retail sectors. The industrial sector includes PT SDL producing magnesium phosphate plus fertilizer, the Aidrat drinking water industry, noni juice production, sea salt processing, and biodiesel fuel innovation from candlenut sunan, along with slipper production and processed food products such as meatballs and nuggets. The service sector covers Persada Printing, convection services, transportation services through Persada Tour and Travel, and daily services such as laundry and barbershops. The retail sector is centered on Toserba Sunan Drajat, the pesantren cooperative established since 1992, as well as various canteens and food courts (Salsabilla, 2024). These business units operate as integrated economic enterprises that provide practical learning opportunities for students while contributing to the economic well-being of the broader community.

Tabel 3. PPSD Business Units and Their Role in Religious Moderation

Sector	Business Units	Role in Moderation
Industry	PT SDL (fertilizer), Aidrat water, noni juice, salt processing, biodiesel, slippers, food products	Collaboration with diverse partners, employment of non-Muslims, practicing Islamic business ethics
Service	Printing, convection, tour and travel, laundry, barbershop	Service to diverse community, professional ethics, interfaith cooperation
Retail	Toserba Sunan Drajat, cooperative, canteens, food courts	Economic interaction with broader community, fair trade practices, community engagement

This economic openness allows PPSD to establish professional cooperation with various parties, including non-Muslims who work alongside Muslim colleagues in the pesantren's business enterprises. In its operations, Islamic values such as honesty and good work ethics are applied as universal standards appreciated by all partners regardless of religious background. Through direct involvement of senior students in these business units, they learn to practice muamalah teachings in the midst of a pluralistic society, fostering awareness that religious differences are not an obstacle to productive collaboration for mutual welfare. The economic dimension of religious moderation at PPSD addresses the socioeconomic factors that can contribute to religious tensions, as research by Haluti et al. (2025) indicates that economic disparities and feelings of marginalization often underlie religious conflicts. By creating economic opportunities that include diverse participants, PPSD demonstrates that religious moderation extends beyond theology to encompass practical dimensions of social and economic life.



Figure 1. Interfaith Forum "Beda tapi Mesra" Visit at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Value Meaning

The implementation of moderation values at PPSD is significantly supported by teachers who serve as models and facilitators of value internalization. The teaching approach emphasizes holistic education, modeling behavior, facilitating critical thinking, and building bridges between the pesantren and the broader community. Each of these aspects contributes to the development of students who are not only knowledgeable about Islamic teachings but also capable of applying those teachings in ways that promote harmony and understanding.

Teachers at PPSD are trained to provide education that addresses not only intellectual but also spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions. This holistic approach recognizes that religious moderation cannot be taught merely as cognitive knowledge but must be embodied in attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. Through their interactions with students and the broader community, teachers demonstrate the application of Islamic values in diverse contexts, serving as role models for students in demonstrating moderate religious attitudes. This modeling is particularly important in shaping students' character and attitudes, as students learn as much from observing their teachers' behavior as from formal instruction (Sya'roni & Zubaidi, 2026).

Rather than imposing rigid interpretations, teachers facilitate critical thinking and dialogue about religious issues, helping students develop the capacity to engage with complex questions and differing perspectives without abandoning their religious commitments. This approach builds intellectual resilience and prepares students for engagement with diverse viewpoints in the broader society. Teachers also actively work to build bridges between the pesantren and the broader community, facilitating interfaith dialogue and collaboration through organizing and participating in interfaith activities, connecting students with community partners, and representing the pesantren in public forums.

The role of teachers in religious moderation has been emphasized in various studies. Alsi (2025) notes that Islamic religious education serves as a foundation for religious moderation and tolerance, with teachers playing a crucial role in shaping students' understanding and attitudes. Similarly, research by Fatih (2024) highlights the importance of educators in implementing moderate curricula and fostering inclusive learning environments that prepare students for responsible citizenship in a pluralistic society (Azhary & Abozaid, 2026).

Synthesis and Contribution to Religious Moderation Discourse

The findings from this community service activity demonstrate that Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat has successfully developed a comprehensive model of religious moderation through the integration of three strategic approaches: institutional modernization, value internalization, and inclusive public ethics. This model addresses the core challenges facing Islamic education in Indonesia: balancing tradition with modernity, fostering tolerance amid diversity, preparing students for engagement in a pluralistic society, and contributing to social harmony through concrete action (Azhary et al., 2025).

The PPSD model contributes to existing discourse on religious moderation through the integration of diverse approaches that encompass intellectual, spiritual, social, and economic

dimensions. Unlike approaches that emphasize only theological or only practical dimensions of moderation, PPSD recognizes that religious moderation cannot be achieved through any single strategy but requires coordinated efforts across multiple domains. The pesantren demonstrates that Islamic values can be meaningfully applied in contemporary contexts without compromising their integrity, with the Catur Piwulang philosophy providing a framework for ethical action that resonates with local culture while addressing universal concerns of justice and compassion.

The PPSD model also shows that pesantren can serve as effective agents of religious moderation, countering narratives that portray these institutions as breeding grounds for extremism. By documenting and disseminating this model, the community service activity provides a concrete example that can inspire and guide other institutions seeking to strengthen their own moderation efforts. The strategies implemented at PPSD are potentially replicable in other Islamic educational institutions, with appropriate adaptations to local contexts, as the three pillars of the model provide a flexible framework that can be adapted to different settings and circumstances (Afkar et al., 2026).

The findings have significant implications for educational policy, suggesting that support for pesantren modernization, teacher training, and interfaith dialogue initiatives can contribute to religious moderation goals. The integration of economic empowerment with religious moderation also suggests the value of holistic approaches that address multiple dimensions of community well-being. However, certain challenges and limitations should be acknowledged. The modernization process requires substantial resources, which may not be available to all pesantren. The integration of diverse elements from Sufi practices to modern business units requires skilled leadership and continuous coordination. External pressures from conservative religious groups may create tensions in implementing inclusive policies. Measuring the actual impact of these strategies on students' long-term attitudes and behaviors presents methodological challenges that require further research.

Nevertheless, the PPSD experience provides valuable lessons for Islamic education and community development in Indonesia. The synthesis of tradition with modernity, the integration of spiritual practice with social engagement, and the combination of economic empowerment with religious values offer a model for holistic community empowerment that addresses both material and spiritual needs. This model demonstrates that religious moderation is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical reality that can be achieved through intentional institutional transformation, comprehensive value internalization, and inclusive community engagement.

CONCLUSION

This community service activity concludes that Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat successfully demonstrates a model of educational institution that upholds religious moderation through three main strategies: adaptive institutional modernization, an integrated value internalization system embedded in intellectual-spiritual traditions, and the implementation of inclusive public ethics based on the Catur Piwulang philosophy. The achievement level of activity targets was substantial, with all three strategic approaches documented and analyzed. The accuracy and suitability between the identified problems and applied methods were confirmed, as the methods employed directly addressed the challenges of balancing tradition and modernity, managing student diversity, preparing for pluralistic engagement, and documenting strategies for dissemination.

The impact and benefits of the implemented activities include: (1) comprehensive documentation of PPSD's religious moderation model that can serve as a reference for other institutions; (2) strengthened interfaith dialogue activities through the "Beda tapi Mesra" forum; (3) enhanced teacher capacity in integrating moderation values into teaching; (4) expanded networks of collaboration with diverse partners; and (5) dissemination of findings through publications and guidebooks. The success of PPSD in building religious harmony demonstrates

that pesantren possess strong social capital to overcome polarization in Indonesia. Harmony at this pesantren is not created spontaneously but through consistent patterns of daily interaction, where religious values are deeply understood without separating text from the broader human context. This model can serve as a reference for the development of Islamic Religious Education that is more responsive to the realities of a pluralistic society.

Recommendations for future community service activities include: (1) conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of PPSD's model on students' attitudes and behaviors in wider society; (2) developing training programs for other pesantren based on PPSD's experience, with appropriate adaptations to local contexts; (3) strengthening partnerships with government agencies and non-governmental organizations to support the scaling-up of effective religious moderation strategies; (4) developing digital learning resources to enhance the dissemination of PPSD's approaches; and (5) expanding research to include comparative studies of religious moderation strategies across different types of pesantren.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

ZSN played the primary role in conceptualizing the research framework and designing the overall methodology for this community service activity. She led the investigation process, including the collection and analysis of field data, and was responsible for the formal analysis that informed the study's findings. She prepared the original draft of the manuscript and undertook subsequent revisions, ensuring the coherence and quality of the final version. Additionally, she supervised the entire project, managed its administration, and coordinated the various stages of implementation from planning to completion. NM contributed significantly to the investigation process by assisting in data collection and curation, organizing and managing the research resources, and ensuring the validity of the findings through rigorous cross-checking. He also played a key role in data visualization, presenting the findings in accessible formats such as tables and figures. He participated in the writing - review and editing process, providing critical feedback and suggestions that enhanced the manuscript's clarity and scholarly rigor, while also supporting project administration throughout the duration of the activity. Both authors have read and approved the final manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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