

Religious Moderation and National Commitment at Sukorejo *Pesantren*, Indonesia: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract: Religious moderation is widely promoted in Indonesian Islamic education, yet less is known about how institutional values become meaningful in the everyday lives of *pesantren* communities. This study examines how religious moderation and national commitment are institutionalized, experienced, and interpreted at Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo *Pesantren*, East Java. Using a qualitative single-case study with a phenomenological orientation, the study draws on semi-structured interviews with 11 purposively selected participants, field observations, and institutional documents. Data were analyzed through iterative thematic comparison across participant accounts, observed practices, and documentary evidence, with Berger and Luckmann's social constructionist perspective serving as a sensitizing framework during the interpretive stage. The findings identify four analytically related dimensions: institutional foundations, educational mediation, communal experience and habituation, and subjective civic-moral orientation. Religious moderation was embedded in institutional philosophy, curriculum, leadership, dialogical pedagogy, *bahtsul masail*, exemplary conduct, residential routines, civic activities, and social service. Participating *santri* interpreted these recurring experiences in terms of respect for difference, social responsibility, service, and national commitment compatible with Islamic moral identity. The study highlights the importance of educational culture and communal experience in moderate education and cautions against reducing moderation to formal curricular content or symbolic nationalism. Its originality lies in a case-based model that conceptualizes relationships among institutional, pedagogical, communal, and experiential dimensions without treating them as a fixed causal sequence.

Keywords: civic-moral orientation; institutional culture; national commitment; *pesantren*; religious moderation.

Abstrak: Moderasi beragama banyak dikembangkan dalam pendidikan Islam di Indonesia, tetapi masih terbatas penjelasan empiris mengenai bagaimana nilai-nilai institusional memperoleh makna dalam kehidupan sehari-hari komunitas *pesantren*. Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana moderasi beragama dan komitmen kebangsaan dilembagakan, dialami, dan dimaknai di Pondok *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, Jawa Timur. Penelitian ini menggunakan studi kasus tunggal kualitatif dengan orientasi fenomenologis yang melibatkan 11 partisipan yang dipilih secara purposif, serta memanfaatkan wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi lapangan, dan dokumen institusional. Data dianalisis melalui perbandingan tematik secara iteratif antara pengalaman partisipan, praktik yang diamati, dan bukti dokumenter, sedangkan perspektif konstruksi sosial Berger dan Luckmann digunakan sebagai kerangka sensitizing pada tahap interpretasi. Temuan mengidentifikasi empat dimensi yang saling berhubungan secara analitis: fondasi institusional, mediasi pendidikan, pengalaman dan pembiasaan komunal, serta orientasi moral-kewargaan subjektif. Moderasi beragama tertanam dalam filosofi institusi, kurikulum, kepemimpinan, pedagogi dialogis, *bahtsul masail*, keteladanan, kehidupan residensial, aktivitas kewargaan, dan pelayanan sosial. *Santri* yang

berpartisipasi memaknai pengalaman tersebut melalui penghormatan terhadap perbedaan, tanggung jawab sosial, pelayanan, dan komitmen kebangsaan yang selaras dengan identitas moral keislaman. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya budaya pendidikan dan pengalaman komunal serta menawarkan model berbasis kasus yang menjelaskan hubungan antara dimensi institusional, pedagogis, komunal, dan pengalaman tanpa mengasumsikan urutan kausal yang tetap.

Kata kunci: orientasi moral-sipil; budaya institusional; komitmen nasional; *pesantren*; moderasi beragama.

1. Introduction

As a multireligious and multicultural society, Indonesia faces challenges not merely because differences exist, but primarily because people must manage these differences within social and civic life. At the national level, the Religious Harmony Index (*Indeks Kerukunan Umat Beragama* [IKUB]) reached 77.89 in 2025, the highest score since the government began measuring the index in 2015 (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2025a). However, SETARA Institute (2025) recorded 260 incidents and 402 acts of violations of freedom of religion or belief throughout 2024, an increase from 217 incidents and 329 acts in 2023. This contrast shows that improvements in aggregate levels of religious harmony do not necessarily correspond with established social practices that ensure acceptance of differences. Therefore, scholars cannot understand religious moderation merely in terms of the importance of tolerance. They must also examine how educational and social processes construct, communicate, internalize, and translate the values of moderation into civic orientations.

Within this context, education provides a strategic arena for developing tolerance, respect for differences, and national commitment (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019). This role becomes particularly important in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) because these institutions not only transmit Islamic knowledge but also shape lived experiences through learning, worship, communal residence, discussion, organizational activities, and social interaction within a shared environment. In July 2024, data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Education Management Information System (EMIS) recorded 41,286 *pesantren* that accommodated 3,339,536 students and involved 284,662 educators and educational personnel (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2025b). This scale gives the ways in which *pesantren* interpret the relationship among Islam, diversity, and citizenship broad social implications. Hefner (2008) and Hefner and Zaman (2007) conceptualize Islamic education as a dynamic social field in which religious authority, pluralism, democracy, and citizenship interact and undergo contextual negotiation. Therefore, studies of religious moderation in *pesantren* need to move beyond the formal curriculum and examine institutional culture and everyday educational experiences.

Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Islamic Boarding School provides an important empirical context because it stands at the intersection of Islamic tradition, nationalism, local security dynamics, and institutional transformation. Historically, KHR As'ad Syamsul Arifin, one of the pioneers of the *pesantren*, contributed to the struggle to defend Indonesian independence through the Hizbullah and Sabilillah networks. The 1983 NU National Conference of Islamic Scholars and the 27th NU Congress in 1984, both held at this *pesantren*, also helped consolidate the relationship among Islam, Pancasila, and national commitment (Fathoni, 2018; Syakir, 2020). However, the broader Situbondo context also shows that society cannot take social resilience for granted. The Situbondo Police increased vigilance against terrorist threats in 2017, while thousands of residents publicly rejected terrorism in 2018 through the *#KamiTidakTakutTeror* movement (Dasuqi, 2018; Husdinariyanto, 2017). At the institutional level, the Ministry of Religious Affairs recognized Sukorejo as a recipient of the Transformative *Pesantren* category at the 2025 *Pesantren* Award, demonstrating the continuity of its institutional transformation (Dhani, 2025). From an academic perspective, Yaqin et al. (2022) also identified contextual, dialogical, tolerant, and madhhab-inclusive Islamic reasoning at Ma'had Aly Sukorejo. These historical, social, and institutional contexts make Sukorejo relevant for empirical investigation, not to affirm the normative label of "moderate," but to understand how the legacy of nationalism,

religious authority, pedagogical practices, and communal life shape experiences of religious moderation and national commitment.

Existing studies on religious moderation in Indonesia reveal at least three major tendencies. The first tendency frames moderation as a normative, theological, and policy-oriented framework for negotiating religious commitment within plural social life. Within Islamic thought, scholars understand *wasatiyyah* (Islamic moderation/balanced orientation) as an ethical orientation that emphasizes balance, justice, dialogue, avoidance of extremes, and the common good rather than the relativization of religious beliefs (Kamali & Ramadan, 2015). In the Indonesian context, scholars commonly associate religious moderation with national commitment, tolerance, nonviolence, and acceptance of cultural diversity. However, political and social actors can also negotiate the discourse of moderation within particular configurations of interests. Alvian and Ardhani (2023) show that actors can adapt constructions of moderate Islam to specific configurations of interests, whereas Sa'ad et al. (2025) propose the concept of critical religious moderation, which emphasizes epistemic humility and reflexivity. Setinawati et al. (2025) also demonstrate that encounters between religion and local culture shape the meaning of moderation. These studies suggest that scholars need to understand religious moderation both as a theological-ethical orientation and as a social discourse that actors continuously negotiate within political, cultural, and institutional contexts.

The second tendency treats religious moderation as a curricular and pedagogical issue. Hanafi et al. (2022) show that religious literacy, interpretation of the Qur'an, and academic interaction shape university students' understanding of moderation rather than mere acceptance of doctrine. Hanafi et al. (2023) further emphasize the importance of learning objectives, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and campus culture in the internalization of moderation. Mulyana (2023) demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education textbooks and instructional practices can integrate the values of nonviolence, equality, tolerance, and national commitment. This tendency shifts scholarly attention from what religious moderation means to how educational institutions teach and practice it. Nevertheless, many studies continue to focus on curricula, classrooms, textbooks, or higher education. As a result, scholars have not fully explained how formal pedagogy, institutional culture, exemplary conduct, and everyday lived experiences interact in the formation of religious moderation.

The third tendency views *pesantren* as institutional ecologies that cultivate religious moderation. Nasir and Rijal (2021) show that *pesantren* transmit moderation through curricula and religious activities that emphasize national commitment, tolerance, nonviolence, and accommodation of local culture. Athoillah et al. (2024) further demonstrate that moderation policies in *pesantren* operate through institutional practices, education across differences, and the strengthening of critical thinking, although various institutional constraints affect their implementation. Qorib and Umiarso (2025) identify connections among theological, social, and cultural values in the formation of moderation, while Setiawan et al. (2026) emphasize the transformation of *pesantren* into inclusive educational spaces. In the Sukorejo context, Yaqin et al. (2022) identify moderation in Islamic legal reasoning through *ushul fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *maqasid al-shari'ah*, contextual interpretation, openness across schools of Islamic jurisprudence, dialogue, and tolerance. However, most of these studies primarily explain values, curricula, policies, or institutional practices. They do not sufficiently reveal how individuals experience these elements personally and internalize them as ethical identities and forms of national commitment.

These three research tendencies have enriched scholarly understanding of the normative foundations of religious moderation, pedagogical strategies, and the role of *pesantren* as value-forming environments. Nevertheless, three research gaps remain. First, many studies explain the values that educational institutions teach, but they do not sufficiently examine how individuals transform institutional norms into subjective moral orientations. Second, researchers often analyze curricula, pedagogy, leadership, religious traditions, and communal life separately, which leaves their integrative mechanisms as a unified educational ecosystem insufficiently explained. Third, scholars more often position national commitment as an indicator of religious moderation than as a civic identity that religious educational experiences actively shape. Therefore, the central issue no longer concerns

whether *pesantren* teach moderation, but rather how students and other educational actors experience, habituate, and internalize a culture of moderation until they understand it as a form of national commitment.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to analyze how educational actors at Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo *Pesantren* experience, interpret, and internalize religious moderation and how they connect these experiences with national commitment. This study focuses its analysis on the relationships among institutional philosophy, curriculum and pedagogy, the exemplary conduct of leaders and teachers, communal life, and students' everyday experiences in shaping religious and civic orientations. The main research question asks: How do educational actors experience and internalize religious moderation in educational life at Sukorejo, and how do these experiences shape their understanding of national commitment?

Theoretically, this study draws on Berger and Luckmann's (1966) social construction perspective as a sensitizing framework for examining how socially shared meanings become established, reproduced, and subjectively interpreted within institutional life. Their concepts of externalization, objectivation, institutionalization, habituation, and internalization provide a conceptual vocabulary for considering the relationship between institutional meanings and individual experience. However, these concepts were not used as predetermined analytical categories or as a sequential model against which the empirical data were coded. Rather, they informed the researchers' sensitivity to the ways institutional values, educational practices, social interactions, and participants' interpretations might intersect within the *pesantren* context.

Accordingly, the study remains empirically open to patterns emerging from participants' accounts, observations, and institutional documents. Berger and Luckmann's framework is employed primarily at the interpretive stage to help explain relationships identified in the data rather than to prescribe in advance how religious moderation and national commitment should develop. This approach enables the study to examine whether, and in what ways, institutional and communal experiences contribute to the meanings participants attach to religious moderation and civic responsibility without assuming a predetermined pathway of internalization.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative single-case study design with a phenomenological orientation to examine how religious moderation and national commitment are institutionalized, experienced, interpreted, and internalized within the educational environment of Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo *Pesantren* in Situbondo, East Java. The case study design was selected because the research focused not only on participants' subjective experiences but also on the institutional, pedagogical, historical, and communal contexts within which those experiences were formed. Accordingly, the *pesantren* was treated as a bounded educational setting in which institutional philosophy, curriculum, leadership, religious practices, communal life, and civic-oriented activities interact in the formation of religious and civic meanings. The phenomenological orientation was used to retain analytical attention to how educational actors made sense of these experiences in their everyday lives rather than to claim a strictly transcendental phenomenological reconstruction of a universal essence of experience.

The case was bounded institutionally, spatially, and temporally. Institutionally, the study focused on Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo *Pesantren* and its educational environment. Spatially, data collection was conducted within the *pesantren* and educational settings directly associated with its learning, religious, communal, and civic activities. Temporally, the primary fieldwork was conducted from June 2 to July 2, 2026, followed by a follow-up interview on July 11, 2026, for clarification and member checking. Sukorejo was selected purposively because its residential educational structure integrates religious learning, communal living, institutional traditions, and civic practices within a single educational environment. Its historical engagement with Islamic education and national commitment also made it an information-rich case for examining how institutional values are translated into everyday educational experiences (Fathoni, 2018).

The unit of analysis was the process through which religious moderation and national commitment were constructed and experienced within the educational life of the *pesantren*. More specifically, the analysis examined the relationships among institutional philosophy, curriculum and pedagogy, leadership and exemplary conduct, religious-intellectual practices such as *bahtsul masail* (collective Islamic legal deliberation), communal routines, civic activities, and participants' interpretations of these experiences. Individual participants were therefore treated as sources of experiential perspectives within the broader institutional case rather than as independent units of analysis. This distinction enabled the study to connect subjective accounts with the institutional and social contexts in which those accounts were produced.

The researchers used purposive sampling to recruit 11 participants who had direct involvement in educational leadership, teaching and learning, institutional administration, character formation, religious practices, and the everyday educational experiences of *santri* (pesantren students). The participants comprised two institutional leaders, one administrative staff member, five teachers, and three *santri*. Participants were selected because their roles and experiences provided information-rich perspectives on institutional policy, curriculum implementation, pedagogical practices, religious formation, communal life, and students' lived experiences. To reduce the risk of deductive identification within a single institutional setting, the researchers reported participants using broad functional categories rather than specific official positions. Participants were assigned anonymous codes, and identifying details that were not analytically necessary were omitted from the manuscript. All participants were anonymized using coded identifiers, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Categories and Research Relevance

Code	Participant Category	Research Relevance
L1	<i>Pesantren</i> leader	Institutional policy and <i>santri</i> development
L2	Educational leader	Curriculum and educational implementation
A1	Administrative staff	Institutional management and educational administration
T1–T5	Teachers	Pedagogy, religious learning, mentoring, and character formation
S1–S3	<i>Santri</i>	Everyday educational, communal, and character-formation experiences

To protect participant confidentiality, the study reports participants through functional categories and anonymous codes rather than personal names. Because several participants occupied specific institutional roles, potentially identifying details were minimized in the presentation of the findings.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Indonesian and lasted approximately 60–90 minutes. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews explored participants' understandings of religious moderation, experiences of religious and social diversity, educational and communal practices, perceptions of teachers' and leaders' exemplary conduct, participation in civic and social activities, and interpretations of national commitment.

Field observations were conducted across multiple educational and communal settings, including classroom instruction, *halaqah*, congregational prayers, *bahtsul masail*, residential routines, disciplinary activities, flag ceremonies, civic events, and extracurricular and community-oriented activities. The observations were used to examine how institutional values were enacted in everyday practices and how participants encountered these values beyond formal classroom instruction. Observational data also provided contextual evidence for comparing participants' accounts with actual institutional and communal practices.

Documentary data included curriculum materials, institutional regulations, educational guidelines, annual reports, guidelines for *santri* activities, public institutional documents, and materials related to religious moderation, character formation, *bahtsul masail*, and civic activities. Public lectures and statements delivered by *pesantren* leaders were treated as contextual and institutional materials rather than as interview data. Documents were analyzed to identify how the institution formally

articulated religious, educational, social, and civic values and to compare institutional discourse with interview and observational evidence.

Data analysis followed an iterative case-based thematic process informed by phenomenological sensitivity to participants' lived experiences. The researchers first read the interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary materials repeatedly to become familiar with the data and to identify statements, events, practices, and institutional expressions relevant to religious moderation and national commitment. During this stage, the researchers maintained reflective notes to identify and critically examine their prior assumptions regarding *pesantren*, moderation, and nationalism.

The researchers then conducted initial coding across the three data sources. Interview data were coded for participants' experiences, interpretations, meanings, and perceived changes in orientation, while observational and documentary data were coded for institutional practices, pedagogical mechanisms, communal routines, and formal expressions of religious and civic values. Codes with conceptual similarities were grouped into broader categories and subsequently developed into themes that captured recurring patterns across the case.

The analysis proceeded through constant comparison among interview, observational, and documentary evidence. Rather than treating these data sources as equivalent, the researchers used them for different analytical purposes: interviews provided access to participants' interpretations and lived meanings; observations documented how institutional values were enacted in practice; and documents provided evidence of formal institutional orientations and organizational discourse. Convergence and divergence among these sources were examined to avoid relying solely on institutional claims or participant self-reports.

Phenomenological analysis was incorporated at the interpretive stage by examining how participants experienced and assigned meaning to recurring educational and communal practices. Particular attention was given to participants' accounts of encounters with difference, dialogical learning, exemplary conduct, communal responsibility, civic participation, and social service. These experiential accounts were interpreted in relation to the institutional and pedagogical contexts identified through observation and documentary analysis. The study therefore did not seek to produce a transcendental description of a single universal essence. Instead, it examined how shared experiential meanings emerged within a specific institutional setting and how those meanings interacted with the organizational and communal structures of the *pesantren*.

Through successive comparison and interpretation, the researchers identified three interconnected analytical dimensions: the institutionalization of religious moderation within *pesantren* educational culture, the pedagogical mediation of religious and civic values, and the experiential internalization of these values through communal life. These dimensions were subsequently used to explain how institutional values, educational practices, and everyday experiences interacted within the Sukorejo case. The conceptual model developed in the study was therefore treated as an empirically grounded abstraction of relationships observed within this bounded case rather than as a causal or universally generalizable sequence.

The credibility and trustworthiness of the study were strengthened through triangulation across interviews, observations, and documentary materials; member checking conducted during the follow-up interview on July 11, 2026; detailed contextual description; maintenance of an audit trail; reflective analytical notes; and discussions among the researchers regarding coding and interpretive decisions. Particular attention was given to examining inconsistencies and potentially divergent accounts across participants and data sources rather than assuming complete institutional consensus. These procedures were used to enhance credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

All participants participated voluntarily and provided written informed consent before data collection. They were informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw, the intended use of interview quotations, and the procedures used to protect confidentiality. Because several participants occupied roles that could potentially make them recognizable within the institution, the researchers minimized identifying information by using broad participant categories, anonymous codes, and the removal of unnecessary role-specific, biographical,

and temporal details from the presentation of the findings. Direct quotations were included only when they were necessary to support the analysis, and potentially identifying contextual details were omitted or generalized without altering the substantive meaning of participants' statements. The researchers also avoided reporting exact interview dates alongside individual quotations in order to reduce the possibility of deductive identification.

3. Results

Historical and Educational Context of Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo

The Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo *pesantren* operates in Banyuputih, Situbondo, East Java. KHR Syamsul Arifin established the *pesantren* in 1908. Its institutional profile records more than 17,000 *santri* from various regions across Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Its educational ecosystem encompasses *diniyah* education and the study of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts), madrasahs and general schools, *Ma'had Aly* (advanced Islamic higher education institution), Universitas Ibrahimy, and various nonformal educational activities. This educational structure enables Sukorejo to function not merely as an institution that transmits religious knowledge but also as a large-scale educational environment in which learning, worship, organizational activities, character formation, and social life occur simultaneously (Humas Pondok *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, 2025d).

Another important characteristic of Sukorejo lies in its efforts to preserve Islamic traditions while responding to social change. The principle of *al-muhafadhatu 'ala al-qadim al-shalih wa al-akhdu bi al-jadid al-aslah* (preserving beneficial traditions while adopting better new practices) manifests in the study of *kitab kuning* and the practice of *bahtsul masail*, which operate alongside general education, technology, leadership development, skills training, and community empowerment programs. The *santri* and alumni organization IKSASS also explicitly promotes the formation of cadres who assume responsibility for religion, the nation, and the state. Through its broader institutional practices, the *pesantren* also connects education with respect for differences, local wisdom, technological adaptation, and social contributions to surrounding communities (Akbar, 2024; Humas Pondok *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, 2025d).

Sukorejo's engagement with national commitment also has strong historical roots. Under the leadership of KHR As'ad Syamsul Arifin, the *pesantren* became an important setting in which Nahdlatul Ulama formulated the relationship between Islam and the state. The NU National Conference of Religious Scholars, held in Sukorejo from December 18 to 21, 1983, produced the Declaration on the Relationship between Pancasila and Islam. The declaration affirmed that Pancasila does not replace religion and that Muslims can accept Pancasila within the framework of religious practice. This process subsequently played an important role in consolidating NU's acceptance of Pancasila at the 27th NU Congress in Situbondo in 1984. KHR As'ad's role in bridging Islamic commitment and national commitment subsequently became an important part of Sukorejo's historical memory (Dinar, 2026; Fathoni, 2018).



Figure 1. Communal Religious Activities at Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo *Pesantren*

Source: Humas Pondok *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo (2025e).

The combination of classical Islamic scholarly traditions, a modern educational system, residential life, social orientation, and a historical legacy of national commitment makes Sukorejo an information-rich context for this study. Its significance does not rest on an initial assumption that Sukorejo automatically represents a “moderate” *pesantren*. Instead, its significance lies in the empirical question of how educational actors translate these normative and national legacies into contemporary educational culture. Sukorejo therefore provides a context for examining whether and how religious and civic values become embedded in institutional philosophy, curriculum, leadership, religious practices, communal interactions, and everyday educational experiences.

Institutionalizing Religious Moderation within Pesantren Educational Culture

Findings from interviews, observations, and institutional documents consistently show that the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo *pesantren* does not implement religious moderation as a stand-alone educational program. Instead, the *pesantren* embeds religious moderation within its institutional culture. It expresses the values of moderation through the interconnections among the orientation of *tafaqquh fi al-din* (deep understanding of religion), the principle of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* (mercy to all creation), commitment to the Indonesian nation, the curriculum structure, exemplary leadership, religious practices, and the discipline of communal life. Educational actors do not experience these elements as separate components. Rather, these elements operate as an integrated educational environment that connects the development of Islamic understanding with social and civic responsibility. At the institutional level, religious moderation therefore functions as a value that the *pesantren* organizes and reproduces through its educational philosophy, institutional practices, and routines of everyday *pesantren* life.

The educational philosophy of the *pesantren* demonstrates that religious commitment and national commitment do not constitute opposing identities. L1 emphasized, “We teach that loving religion does not mean rejecting the state. In fact, protecting the state is part of safeguarding the welfare of the people” (L1, personal communication, June 4, 2026). The educational orientation also reflects this perspective by connecting mastery of Islamic knowledge with civic understanding. As L2 explained, “Students study the *kitab kuning*, but at the same time they also understand the nation’s history, Pancasila, and their responsibilities as citizens” (L2, personal communication, June 11, 2026). These two accounts show that the *pesantren* places national commitment within a religious-moral framework and integrates it into its educational objectives. Institutional philosophy therefore provides a foundational orientation that connects the development of Islamic knowledge, social responsibility, and civic awareness.

Document analysis and observations show that the *pesantren* translates these institutional values concretely into its curriculum, religious activities, and everyday educational routines. This integration appears in the study of *kitab kuning* and Islamic education alongside efforts to strengthen national awareness. It also appears in activities such as Monday flag ceremonies, National *Santri* Day commemorations (see Figure 1), discussions on national issues, *bahtsul masail* addressing contemporary social issues, and community service. Curriculum documents and institutional guidelines also identify moral conduct, tolerance, discipline, social responsibility, and national awareness as integral components of the educational orientation. Thus, the values of moderation do not remain at the level of institutional vision; the *pesantren* translates them into recurring and structured practices.

Table 2. Institutional Expressions of Religious Moderation

Institutional Domain	Empirical Expression	Value Emphasized
Educational philosophy	Integration of Islamic devotion and national responsibility	Religious-civic compatibility
Curriculum	<i>Kitab kuning</i> , Islamic learning, and civic-national content	Religious knowledge and citizenship

Institutional Domain	Empirical Expression	Value Emphasized
Leadership	Exemplary conduct of kiai and teachers	Moderation and responsibility
Religious-intellectual activities	<i>Bahtsul masail</i> and religious discussions	Dialogue and plurality of opinion
Institutional routines	Monday flag ceremonies and National <i>Santri</i> Day commemorations	National belonging
Social engagement	Community service and social participation	Social responsibility

Source: Research documentation, 2026.

Table 2 shows that the *pesantren* expressed religious moderation across multiple institutional domains rather than concentrating it within a single curricular component. Educational philosophy provided the normative orientation, while the curriculum, leadership, religious-intellectual activities, institutional routines, and social engagement translated these values into recurring educational practices. This pattern indicates that moderation at Sukorejo operated through an interconnected institutional arrangement in which religious learning, civic responsibility, dialogue, exemplary conduct, and communal participation formed part of the same educational environment.

Accounts from several teacher participants, together with observational evidence, indicate that exemplary conduct functioned as one medium through which values associated with moderation were communicated in everyday educational life. T1 explained that *santri* did not encounter these values only through formal explanations. They also directly observed how teachers responded to differences, communicated with others, and facilitated dialogue in everyday interactions. In describing this process, T1 emphasized that students learned values by observing teachers' concrete behavior:

"Students observe how teachers behave, how they respect differences, and how they engage in dialogue. Through these experiences, they learn that Islam teaches balance. This process is important because learning does not occur only through information but also through observing their teachers. Students directly experience this dimension of education" (T1, personal communication, June 11, 2026).

This experience shows that teachers' behavior provides a moral reference through which *santri* repeatedly observe the values of balance, respect for differences, and dialogue in practice. Exemplary conduct therefore does not operate outside the educational process. Instead, it forms part of everyday educational experiences that connect normative messages with social practices within the *pesantren* environment.

T2 described a similar pattern and emphasized that the learning process seeks to prevent the formation of exclusivist attitudes and claims of group superiority. Teacher participants described efforts to create learning environments in which differences could be discussed as part of social and religious life rather than treated solely as sources of opposition. T2 described this pedagogical orientation as follows:

"We avoid teaching methods that make students feel that their group is the most correct. We encourage them to understand differences as part of the natural order" (T2, personal communication, June 13, 2026).

Because life in the residential *pesantren* continues throughout the day, these patterns of exemplary conduct and interaction continually expose *santri* to institutional values. They encounter these values not only in formal learning but also through everyday relationships with teachers, administrators, and the broader *pesantren* community. At the institutional level, moderation therefore operates not only as a value that teachers explicitly teach but also as a behavioral pattern that educational actors demonstrate, observe, and reproduce throughout educational life.

Field observations show that the values of moderation repeatedly appeared across various routines of *pesantren* life, including interactions in residential quarters, congregational worship, classroom learning, communal discipline, religious discussions, and community service activities. The residential environment exposed *santri* to these values not only in formal settings but also through

recurring patterns of everyday interaction. They therefore encountered moderation consistently through teaching, religious practices, interpersonal relationships, and institutional routines, which made it part of their everyday experiences. This repetitive pattern shows that institutional culture operates through habituation integrated into the rhythm of *pesantren* life rather than through separate or fragmented educational interventions.

Overall, evidence from interviews, observations, and institutional documentation shows that Sukorejo institutionally embeds religious moderation through the interconnections among its educational philosophy, curriculum, leadership, religious practices, and communal routines. Religious moderation does not function as a stand-alone component. Instead, it forms part of an educational environment that repeatedly brings together Islamic understanding, exemplary conduct, discipline, dialogue, and social responsibility. These findings also show that the institutional level provides the framework through which these values become present and meaningful in everyday educational experiences.

Dialogical Pedagogy and the Formation of National Commitment

The second finding shows that Sukorejo translates its institutional values into an understanding of national commitment through several interconnected pedagogical mechanisms. Interviews and observations show that this process occurs through dialogical learning, *bahtsul masail*, contextual readings of *fiqh*, teachers' exemplary conduct, civic activities, and community service. The participating *santri* described national commitment as something they encountered across multiple educational settings rather than solely through civics instruction. Instead, they encounter it across various formal and nonformal educational settings that connect Islamic teachings with issues of justice, public welfare, diversity, and social responsibility. This pattern shows that pedagogical experiences serve as a primary medium through which institutional values shape the ways students understand the relationship between Islamic ethics and their responsibilities as citizens.

National commitment emerges as an integral part of various learning environments rather than as a subject confined to civics education. L2 explained, "National commitment is not taught only in Civics classes. Every teacher is responsible for instilling love for the nation through Islamic values. We consistently explain that preserving Indonesia is part of preserving public welfare (*maslahah*)" (L2, personal communication, June 11, 2026). This account shows that educators frame nationalism through the vocabulary of Islamic ethics that students already encounter in their educational experiences, including *maslahah* (public welfare), justice, responsibility, and tolerance. The *pesantren* therefore develops students' understanding of citizenship by connecting religious values with social responsibility, enabling them to understand commitment to the nation as part of a broader moral orientation toward communal life.

The study of *kitab kuning* and *fiqh* also provides an important setting for connecting Islamic knowledge with contemporary social issues. T3 explained that the study of Islamic law does not end with mastery of legal principles and textual sources. Instead, teachers direct students to consider issues related to social life, justice, and the diversity of Indonesian society:

"When discussing *fiqh*, students inevitably encounter questions related to society. We encourage them to understand that Islamic law aims to promote justice, social peace, and harmony among all citizens. These principles provide a fundamental basis for living as members of a nation and a state. We also encourage students to recognize the religious and ethnic diversity that characterizes Indonesian society" (T3, personal communication, June 13, 2026).

Classroom observations show that teachers did not use Islamic texts merely to reproduce doctrinal knowledge. They frequently used these texts as points of departure for discussing social issues, diversity, and social responsibility. During this process, *santri* also encountered diverse scholarly perspectives and considered more than one interpretation before reaching conclusions. The teaching of *fiqh* therefore functioned as a pedagogical space that connected the Islamic scholarly tradition with contemporary social realities.

Observations of *bahtsul masail* activities show that this forum provides a pedagogical space in which *santri* directly encounter differences in religious arguments. During one observed session, participants discussed Muslim responsibilities within a multicultural society. The facilitator did not establish a single answer at the beginning of the session. Instead, the facilitator directed the *santri* to examine several scholarly opinions, present the foundations of their arguments, respond to differing perspectives, and formulate conclusions through collective reasoning. Participants therefore treated differences of opinion as objects of deliberation rather than as threats to religious certainty. This pattern shows that *bahtsul masail* creates an educational space that combines mastery of the Islamic scholarly tradition with the capacity to engage in dialogue, consider alternative perspectives, and formulate responses to contemporary social issues.

Institutional documentation reinforces these findings. The 2025 rulings of the *Bahtsul Masail* Forum Mudzakaroh Ma'al Ikhwan (FMMI) Sukorejo show that *fiqh* deliberations addressed concrete public issues, including the Asset Forfeiture Bill, abolition, amnesty, remission and clemency, and public debt. The forum brought classical *fiqh* sources into discussions of corruption, citizens' rights, the public interest, justice, state authority, and responsibility for managing public finances (Humas Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, 2025a). Other official documentation concerning the MDI *Bahtsul Masail* also shows a deliberative process in which participants presented arguments based on *kitab kuning* before reaching a collective agreement in response to contemporary *muamalah* (Islamic rules governing social and economic transactions) issues (Humas Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, 2025c). The observational and documentary evidence therefore shows that these dialogical practices extend beyond a single observed session. Instead, they constitute part of the *pesantren*'s recurring intellectual tradition, which continuously brings religious texts into dialogue with issues of social and civic life.



Figure 2. *Bahtsul Masail* as a Dialogical Learning Practice at Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Pesantren

Source: Humas Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo (Humas Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, 2025c).

Civic and social activities provide another setting in which *santri* experience national commitment in practice. Field observations documented students' participation in flag ceremonies, Independence Day commemorations, National *Santri* Day activities (see Figure 1), community service, and various social activities. These experiences extend nationalism beyond participation in state symbols and national ceremonies by connecting it with responsibility for communal life. S1 described this shift in meaning: "Before entering the *pesantren*, I thought nationalism was simply about attending flag ceremonies. Here, I learned that loving Indonesia means respecting differences, helping society, and maintaining peace" (S1, personal communication, June 28, 2026). This account shows that civic activities

acquire broader meaning when students connect them with respect for differences, social service, and the maintenance of peaceful social relations.

S2 described a similar understanding by connecting national responsibility with Islamic ethical principles that extend across ethnic and religious boundaries. S2 explained, “Teachers always remind us that Islam teaches mercy for all humanity. Therefore, protecting our country means protecting the people who live in it, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds” (S2, personal communication, June 29, 2026). The accounts of the participating *santri* indicate that national commitment was not understood only through state symbols but also through practices associated with social responsibility, respect for diversity, and service to others. They also interpret it through practices that maintain social harmony, support communities, respect diversity, and fulfill responsibilities toward fellow citizens.

Table 3. Pedagogical Mechanisms Linking Islamic Learning and National Commitment

Pedagogical Mechanism	Empirical Practice	Experienced Meaning
Dialogical learning	Classroom questioning, discussion, and consideration of differing perspectives	Respect for differing views
<i>Bahtsul masail</i>	Examination of multiple scholarly opinions and collective deliberation on contemporary issues	Critical religious reasoning
Contextual <i>fiqh</i> learning	Connecting <i>kitab kuning</i> and Islamic legal reasoning with social and civic questions	Application of religious ethics to public life
Teacher role modeling	Everyday exemplary conduct in dialogue, respect, and social interaction	Ethical habituation
Civic rituals	Flag ceremonies, Independence Day activities, and National <i>Santri</i> Day commemorations	National belonging
Community engagement	Community service and social activities	Citizenship as social responsibility

Source: Research data from interviews, field observations, and institutional documentation, 2026.

Table 3 summarizes the main pedagogical mechanisms through which Sukorejo translates institutional values into experiences of national commitment. Dialogical learning, contextual *fiqh* instruction, and *bahtsul masail* provide spaces in which participants connect Islamic reasoning with diversity and contemporary public issues, while teachers’ exemplary conduct reinforces these values through everyday behavior. Civic rituals and social engagement extend the learning process beyond the classroom by connecting national belonging with participation and social responsibility. Taken together, these mechanisms show that the *pesantren* develops national commitment through the interaction of religious reasoning, dialogical engagement, exemplary conduct, civic experiences, and social participation rather than through civics instruction alone.

Across the participant accounts, national commitment was frequently described in ethical and relational terms rather than solely through state symbols or participation in national ceremonies. In their accounts, they associated national belonging with responsibility toward others, protection of the public good, respect for differences, maintenance of social harmony, and participation in community service. These interpretations show that participants did not perceive commitment to the nation merely as symbolic loyalty to the state. Instead, they understood it as a moral orientation that they enacted through everyday social relationships. In their experiences, nationalism therefore acquired meaning through practices of responsibility, care, respect, and service that connected religious identity with civic life.

These pedagogical experiences create a social environment in which *santri* repeatedly encounter the values of moderation through learning, dialogue, exemplary conduct, religious practices, civic activities, and social engagement. The participating *santri* described these repeated experiences as contributing to the way institutional values became meaningful within their everyday interactions and practices.

From Value Recognition to Civic-Moral Internalization: Students' Lived Experiences

The third finding concerns how the participating *santri* described the internalization of religious moderation and national commitment through their everyday experiences in the *pesantren*. This process does not occur as a sudden transformation. Instead, it develops through three interconnected phases: recognition, when *santri* begin to recognize diverse values, perspectives, and ways of life; habituation, when they repeatedly encounter these values through learning, worship, communal interactions, exemplary conduct, and social activities; and internalized meaning, when these recurring experiences acquire personal significance and become part of how *santri* understand the relationship among Islamic identity, social responsibility, and national life (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Everyday life in the *pesantren* therefore provides a setting in which *santri* gradually understand, practice, and subjectively interpret values that they initially encounter as external norms.

In the participating *santri*'s accounts, one recurring dimension involved the recognition of difference. Their narratives indicate that encounters with peers from different regions and exposure to variations in religious practices and interpretations broadened their awareness of diversity within the *pesantren* environment. Interactions with peers from different regions, encounters with variations in religious practices and perspectives, and communal life within the *pesantren* broaden the students' experiential horizons regarding diversity. S1 described this process as follows:

"Initially, I understood Islam only from my family's perspective. After studying here, I realized that Islam teaches us to respect differences while remaining committed to our beliefs. Living with friends from different regions taught me that diversity is something to appreciate, not fear" (S1, personal communication, June 28, 2026).

This account shows that the recognition of difference does not weaken religious commitment. Instead, it broadens the ways in which *santri* understand diversity while maintaining their religious convictions. At this stage, for the participating *santri*, communal life provided a setting in which social and religious plurality was encountered more concretely. Their accounts suggest that these experiences encouraged an understanding that religious commitment could coexist with respect for difference.

A second analytical dimension concerns habituation through recurring communal practices. The student participants described daily routines such as collective worship, study, shared responsibilities, and discussion as settings in which cooperation and mutual respect were repeatedly practiced. Field observations show that *santri* from different regions live within the same residential environment, participate in congregational worship, study together, maintain shared spaces, engage in discussions, and fulfill collective responsibilities. S2 described this experience as follows:

"We pray together, study together, clean the dormitories together, and discuss problems together. Those activities teach us to cooperate regardless of where we come from" (S2, personal communication, June 29, 2026).

This experience shows that *santri* repeatedly encounter the values of cooperation, mutual respect, and shared responsibility through everyday practices rather than solely through separate forms of moral instruction. The accounts of the student participants indicate that communal routines repeatedly placed them in situations requiring cooperation across regional and social differences. As a result, they do not merely recognize differences cognitively but also negotiate them through the experience of living together. Habituation therefore serves as an important medium that connects the recognition of difference with the development of more personal meanings regarding communal life.



Figure 3. Communal Religious Learning as an Environment of Value Habituation at Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Pesantren

Source: Humas Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo (2025b).

In the third phase, the process shifts from recognition and habituation toward internalized meaning, as *santri* begin to interpret the values they experience in *pesantren* life as personal moral responsibilities. In S3's experience, national commitment extends beyond state symbols and finds expression in concrete actions related to social service, the maintenance of harmony, and respect for differences. S3 explained:

"Here, we are taught that serving society is part of worship. Helping others, maintaining harmony, and respecting differences are also expressions of loving Indonesia" (S3, personal communication, July 1, 2026).

This account shows that national commitment acquires meaning through the relationship between religious ethics and responsibility for communal life. *Santri* understand community service as part of worship, while they interpret helping others, maintaining harmony, and respecting differences as concrete expressions of their commitment to Indonesia. In the participants' narratives, these values were not described merely as institutional expectations but were increasingly interpreted as personally meaningful ethical responsibilities. Instead, they begin to interpret these values personally as a moral orientation that connects Islamic identity with civic responsibility.

Accounts from selected teacher and administrative participants were broadly consistent with the student participants' descriptions of greater openness toward difference and stronger emphasis on social responsibility. T1 observed that students' participation in discussions, social activities, and interactions with teachers corresponded with increasingly open attitudes toward differences. T1 explained:

"Students who initially tended to think in black-and-white terms gradually become more open after participating in discussions, community activities, and interactions with teachers" (T1, personal communication, June 11, 2026).

This observation aligns with A1's account, which identified increasingly respectful communication and collaborative behavior in interactions among *santri* (A1, personal communication, June 12, 2026). Institutional documentation also consistently identifies discipline, cooperation, social service, respect, and national responsibility as components of the *pesantren's* character-formation orientation. The convergence among students' experiences, observations from teachers and administrators, and institutional documentation supports the finding that *santri* develop different orientations toward diversity and social responsibility. However, the available evidence does not establish a causal relationship or longitudinal transformation beyond the scope of the data.

Table 4. Phenomenological Structure of Value Internalization

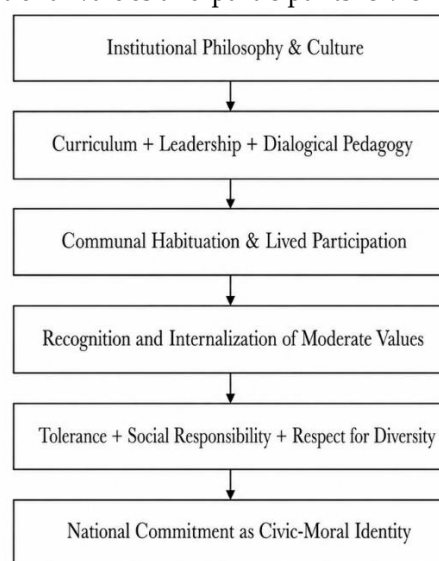
Experiential Phase	Lived Experience	Meaning Constructed
Recognition	Encountering peers from diverse regional backgrounds and engaging with multiple religious interpretations	<i>Santri</i> understand difference as compatible with continued religious commitment
Habituation	Repeated participation in communal learning, worship, dialogue, shared responsibilities, and social activities	Moderation becomes an everyday social practice expressed through cooperation and mutual respect
Internalized meaning	Relating Islamic ethical values to service, responsibility, social harmony, and respect for others	<i>Santri</i> understand national commitment as part of Islamic moral identity and civic responsibility

Source: Research data from interviews, field observations, and institutional documentation, 2026.

Table 4 shows that *santri* do not internalize values through the direct acceptance of doctrine. Instead, they internalize these values through a sequence of interconnected experiences. Encounters with diversity initiate the recognition of difference, communal routines provide opportunities for habituation, and experiences of service, responsibility, and communal life give these values more personal meaning. In the final phase, *santri* begin to perceive national commitment not as an external demand separate from religion but as part of how they understand Islamic moral responsibility within social and civic life.

The students' accounts show that they do not experience religious moderation as a theological compromise or as a state discourse imposed from outside. Instead, they understand moderation as a way of practicing religious commitment through respect for differences, responsibility, cooperation, social service, and the maintenance of harmony. Within these experiences, *santri* do not position Islamic identity in opposition to civic identity. Rather, they understand Islamic identity as an ethical foundation for interpreting their responsibilities toward communal life. The essential structure that emerges from the students' accounts therefore indicates that national commitment acquires meaning as an ethical extension of religious identity enacted through everyday social practices.

The findings indicate that pedagogy, communal habituation, and everyday experiences mediate the relationship between institutional values and participants' civic-moral orientations.

**Figure 4. Empirical Process of Religious Moderation and National Commitment Internalization**

Source: Constructed from research data, 2026.

Figure 4 shows that the internalization of national commitment develops through a sequence of interconnected processes. Institutional philosophy and culture provide the initial foundation, which the *pesantren* then translates through its curriculum, leadership, and dialogical pedagogy. Communal habituation and everyday participation extend this process by enabling *santri* to recognize and internalize the values of moderation. Through these experiences, tolerance, social responsibility, and respect for diversity acquire personal meaning and provide the foundation for national commitment as a civic-moral identity.

4. Discussion

This study shows that religious moderation at Sukorejo develops through a layered educational process that moves from the institutional level to the subjective experiences of *santri*. The *pesantren* does not present moderation as a separate academic subject. Instead, it embeds moderation within its educational philosophy, curriculum, leadership, religious practices, and communal culture. The *pesantren* then translates these values through dialogical pedagogy, *bahtsul masail*, contextual *fiqh*, teachers' exemplary conduct, civic rituals, and social service. Through repeated experiences, *santri* come to understand national commitment not merely as symbolic loyalty to the state but as an ethical responsibility connected to their Islamic identity. Statements such as "loving religion does not mean rejecting the state" and "loving Indonesia means respecting differences, helping society, and maintaining peace" demonstrate continuity between institutional meanings and personal experiences. The central finding of this study, therefore, is not simply that the *pesantren* teaches moderation, but that it translates institutionalized religious values into ethical and civic orientations within everyday life.

Berger and Luckmann's (1966) social construction framework, particularly the relationship among institutionalization, habituation, and internalization, helps explain this pattern. Sukorejo gives objective form to the values of moderation, *masalah*, social responsibility, and national commitment through its institutional philosophy, curriculum, regulations, traditions, *bahtsul masail*, national rituals, and the exemplary conduct of *kiai* (Islamic religious scholar and *pesantren* leader) and teachers. As a residential institution, the *pesantren* strengthens habituation by integrating learning, worship, social relationships, discipline, and character formation into everyday life. Through repetition, interaction, and interpretation, *santri* gradually assign subjective meanings to these institutionalized values. The theoretical implication is that the formation of moderation depends less on the transmission of normative concepts than on an institution's capacity to repeatedly embody these values in social experience. In the Sukorejo context, communal habituation therefore functions as an important mechanism that connects institutional reality with the formation of subjective ethical-civic orientations.

Normative scholarship conceptualizes religious moderation as an ethical orientation that emphasizes balance, justice, tolerance, avoidance of extremes, and the common good (Kamali & Ramadan, 2015). In the Indonesian context, however, moderation does not operate as a completely neutral concept because political actors can also negotiate constructions of "moderate Islam" within particular configurations of political interests, including those that emphasize national unity and stability (Alvian & Ardhani, 2023). The Sukorejo findings do not negate this critique. Instead, they show that national commitment can also acquire legitimacy through religious-moral concepts such as *masalah*, justice, responsibility, social service, and respect for differences. This pattern aligns with arguments that contextual and reflexive processes shape moderation rather than the mere transmission of formal norms (Sa'ad et al., 2025; Setinawati et al., 2025). Religious moderation can therefore function not only as a state discourse but also as a locally embedded moral practice shaped through religious authority, institutional traditions, and communal experiences. Nevertheless, its social meaning remains connected to political dimensions because institutional actors influence how communities interpret and enact moderation in everyday life.

The findings of this study both reinforce and extend scholarship that conceptualizes religious moderation as an outcome of pedagogical processes and educational culture. Hanafi et al. (2022) show that religious literacy, interpretation, and academic engagement contribute to the development of moderation, while Hanafi et al. (2022) show that religious literacy, interpretation, and academic

engagement contribute to the development of moderation, while Hanafi et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of educational content, teaching strategies, student perceptions, and campus culture in the internalization of these values. From a different methodological and social context, Mualim (2024) further demonstrates that internalized moderation orientations can shape how young people respond to religious difference and tolerance. The Sukorejo findings complement these studies by showing how such orientations are experienced and interpreted within the everyday environment of a residential *pesantren*, where educational culture functions not merely as the context of learning but as an educational medium in itself. This distinction is important because cultural and institutional practices are not inherently moderate or ideologically neutral. In a different Indonesian setting, Zakirman et al. (2025) show that educational institutions, religious gatherings, and local cultural symbols can also serve as vehicles through which particular religious-ideological orientations are embedded and negotiated. The significance of the Sukorejo case, therefore, lies not simply in the presence of communal traditions, but in the dialogical, ethical, and civic meanings that are repeatedly mediated through them.

The findings also reinforce studies that conceptualize *pesantren* as institutional ecologies that cultivate moderation through educational structures and institutional practices. Nasir and Rijal (2021) demonstrate the relationship among curricula, religious activities, and national orientation in the internalization of moderation. In the Sukorejo context, Yaqin et al. (2022) identify moderate reasoning through *ushul fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), *maqasid al-shari'ah* (objectives of Islamic law), contextual interpretation, openness across schools of Islamic jurisprudence, dialogue, and tolerance. The present study confirms this pattern through *bahtsul masail* but extends it beyond the domain of legal reasoning to include exemplary conduct, communal behavior, social responsibility, and interpretations of citizenship. In line with Qorib and Umiarso (2025), the findings also show that moderation integrates theological, social, and cultural values. The contribution of the present study lies in explaining how these values move from institutional structures through pedagogical practices and communal habituation before *santri* internalize them as an ethical identity and a form of national commitment.

At an interpretive level, religious moderation in these findings performs interconnected social, historical-institutional, ideological, and theological functions. Socially, moderation supports communal life by promoting tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility (Verkuyten et al., 2023). Historically and institutionally, the Sukorejo experience shows that religious traditions and national commitments do not necessarily constitute mutually exclusive identities, although their relationship can still involve social boundaries and tensions (Menchik, 2014; Sutomo & Budihardjo, 2021). Ideologically and theologically, national commitment acquires legitimacy when educational actors interpret it through religious concepts such as *maslahah*, justice, *rahmatan lil-'alamin*, service, and responsibility. This pattern aligns with the use of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and public welfare to connect Islamic norms with public life (Shabir et al., 2026). These findings also further specify Berger and Luckmann's (1966) framework by showing that educational mediation and communal habituation mediate the movement from institutionalization to internalization and connect institutional values with the formation of civic-moral identity. This elaboration provides the foundation for the Integrated Phenomenological Model of Religious Moderation and National Commitment (IPMRNC).

However, scholars should not romanticize this integrative function. The institutional promotion of moderation does not necessarily ensure its uncontested realization. Jubba et al. (2021), for example, show that moderation initiatives within major Indonesian Islamic organizations continue to encounter conservative contestation and challenges of social recognition. Previous studies further indicate that consensus-oriented approaches can restrict space for dissenting voices and that tolerance can operate within asymmetrical power relations (Menchik, 2014; Verkuyten et al., 2023). Authority-based exemplary conduct may also shift toward compliance without reflection when institutions weaken dialogue and accountability (Buanaputra et al., 2022; Saptono et al., 2023). Similarly, national rituals may remain forms of symbolic reproduction if participants do not connect them with reflection and civic action (Moser, 2016). Religious moderation can even lose its dialogical character when institutions reduce it to a top-down instrument for political stability and uniformity (Adiprasetya, 2024; Alvian &

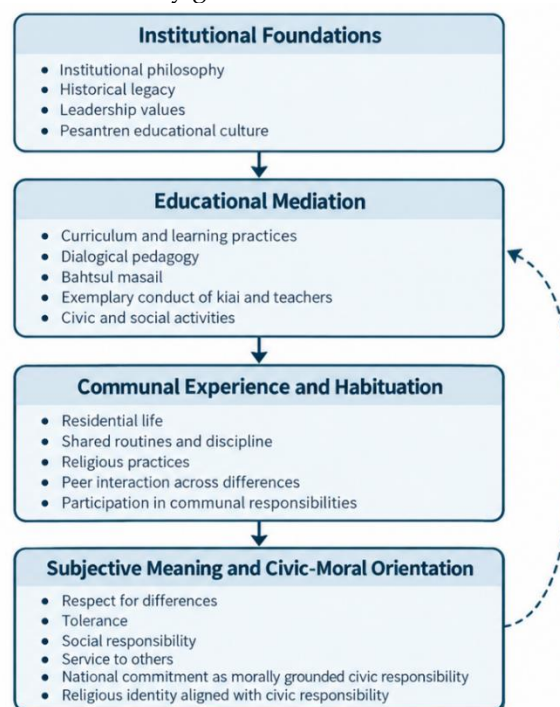
Ardhani, 2023). The strength of the IPMRNC therefore does not lie in homogenizing religious and national identities. Rather, it lies in an institution's capacity to sustain processes of internalization that remain dialogical, reflective, accountable, and open to differences.

Viewed together, the empirically derived themes reveal a relationship among institutional culture, educational mediation, communal experience, and participants' interpretations of religious and civic responsibility. This pattern emerged through thematic comparison across interviews, observations, and documentary evidence rather than from the application of a predetermined theoretical sequence. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) social construction perspective provides a useful interpretive lens for understanding this relationship, particularly the ways institutionalized meanings may become embedded in recurring social practices and acquire subjective significance.

The Integrated Phenomenological Model of Religious Moderation and National Commitment (IPMRNC) was developed from this empirical synthesis. The model should therefore be understood as a case-based interpretive abstraction rather than as a direct operationalization or confirmation of Berger and Luckmann's framework. It identifies relationships observed within the Sukorejo setting among institutional foundations, educational practices, communal experiences, and participants' civic-moral orientations. The directionality shown in the model represents an analytical interpretation of these relationships and should not be read as evidence of a fixed, linear, or causal developmental sequence.

In practical terms, these findings highlight the importance of embedding religious moderation within educational culture, dialogical pedagogy, and contextual religious practices rather than limiting it to the delivery of formal instructional content (Yaqin et al., 2022; Hanafi et al., 2023). They also suggest caution toward overly standardized and top-down approaches, which may reduce religious moderation to a normative instrument insufficiently attentive to local traditions and institutional dynamics (Adiprasetya, 2024; Alvian & Ardhani, 2023). Future evaluations may therefore examine the quality of dialogue, social participation, respectful engagement with differences, interpretations of diversity, civic engagement, and the relationship between religious ethics and public responsibility.

The study presents an integrative model derived from the Sukorejo case, linking institutional foundations, educational mediation, communal experience, and civic-moral orientations as an interpretive rather than causal or universally generalizable framework.



Note: Arrows indicate analytical relationships among dimensions, not a fixed linear or causal developmental sequence.

Figure 5. Integrated Phenomenological Model of Religious Moderation and National Commitment (IPMRNC)

Source: Constructed by the authors from the research findings, 2026.

Figure 5 illustrates the analytical relationships identified among institutional foundations, educational mediation, communal experience, and participants' interpretations of religious and civic responsibility. Institutional philosophy, historical legacy, leadership values, and *pesantren* educational culture provide the context in which curriculum, dialogical pedagogy, *bahtsul masail*, exemplary conduct, and civic activities are experienced. These values are reinforced through residential life, shared routines, religious practices, peer interaction, and communal responsibilities. Through repeated participation and interpretation, participants attach subjective meanings to these experiences, including tolerance, respect for differences, social responsibility, service to others, and national commitment as a morally grounded civic responsibility. The arrows in the model indicate interpretive relationships among these dimensions rather than a fixed temporal or causal sequence.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that religious moderation and national commitment at Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo *Pesantren* are not confined to formal instruction or symbolic civic activities. They are embedded in an educational environment in which institutional philosophy, curriculum, leadership, dialogical learning, *bahtsul masail*, exemplary conduct, residential routines, and social engagement intersect. Within this environment, the participating *santri* described recurring experiences of dialogue, cooperation, responsibility, and service as meaningful contexts for understanding religious and civic life. National commitment was consequently interpreted not simply as symbolic loyalty to the state but as a moral responsibility compatible with Islamic identity, particularly through respect for difference, concern for the public good, and service to others.

Conceptually, the findings show that the relationship between institutional values and participants' civic-moral orientations is mediated through educational and communal experience rather than through the direct transmission of normative doctrine. Berger and Luckmann's social construction perspective helps interpret these relationships but does not predetermine their empirical form. The study therefore contributes a case-based Integrated Phenomenological Model of Religious Moderation and National Commitment (IPMRNC) that connects institutional foundations, educational mediation, communal experience, and subjective civic-moral orientation. The model represents an interpretive abstraction of relationships identified within the Sukorejo case rather than a fixed developmental pathway, causal model, or universally generalizable account of *pesantren* education.

These findings suggest that religious moderation education benefits from being embedded in institutional culture, dialogical learning, communal participation, and socially meaningful practices rather than being limited to formal curricular content. At the same time, the study is bounded by its single-site design, its 11 participants, and the specific period in which the fieldwork was conducted. The findings therefore illuminate processes within this case rather than represent the wider *pesantren* population. Future research should examine the transferability and boundaries of the proposed model through comparative and longitudinal studies across *pesantren* with different institutional traditions, include dissenting and negative cases, and investigate how digital religious environments interact with residential educational experiences in shaping religious and civic orientations.

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