

## Instilling Aswaja Values in Shaping Moderate Religious Attitudes among Students at Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools

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### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes efforts to instill Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja) values in shaping religious moderation attitudes among santri at Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School, Palembang. Aswaja values emphasizing balance, tolerance, and harmony serve as a vital foundation in facing modernity and religious polarization challenges. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis involving pesantren leaders, ustadz/ustadzah, and santri. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key patterns, with validity ensured through source and method triangulation. Findings reveal that Aswaja values are instilled systematically through classical Islamic text studies (kitab kuning), routine religious activities, and tolerance-building in daily interactions. These values effectively cultivate moderate attitudes, reflected in santri's ability to appreciate differing views, maintain social harmony, and reject extremism. Challenges include the influence of digital technology and external pressures. These findings emphasize the importance of synergy between pesantren education and contextual approaches to build an inclusive and tolerant generation.

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### INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, characterized by rapid social, cultural, and technological changes, the challenges to harmony and tolerance in religious life have become increasingly complex. Amid the currents of modernization, which sometimes bring influences of individualism and radicalism, pesantren as a traditional Islamic educational institution plays a strategic role in shaping the character of santri based on the values of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Aswaja).<sup>1</sup> The Aswaja values,

<sup>1</sup> Mohamad Athoillah et al., "Policies and Practices Religious Moderation in Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2024): 387-96, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i2.27543>.

which emphasize principles of balance (*tawassuth*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), justice (*'i'tidal'*), and harmony (*tawazun*), are believed to provide a solid foundation for fostering religious moderation in facing various contemporary challenges.<sup>2</sup>

Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School in Palembang City is one of the institutions that consistently instills Aswaja values in its santri.<sup>3</sup> This institution not only teaches religious knowledge through classical texts (*kutub al-turats*) but also strives to build the character of santri to face the diverse social realities with a moderate and inclusive attitude.<sup>4</sup> The instillation of Aswaja values becomes a vital effort in addressing critical issues such as religious radicalism, social polarization, and the increasing horizontal conflicts based on beliefs that often occur in society.<sup>5</sup>

In line with the growing urgency of religious moderation in Indonesia, this study aims to explore in depth the process and strategies of instilling Aswaja values at Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School, as well as their impact on shaping religious moderation attitudes among santri. This study is relevant to address the need for an educational model based on Aswaja values that can bridge various differences without losing the authentic Islamic identity.<sup>6</sup>

However, before delving deeper into the strategies and impacts of instilling Aswaja values, it is important to understand the historical and philosophical context of pesantren as a unique Islamic educational institution. Pesantren in Indonesia not only functions as a center of religious learning but also as a center for nurturing distinctive cultural values.<sup>7</sup> The philosophy of pesantren education, which emphasizes an integrative approach between knowledge and morality, has made it a stronghold of morality amid social dynamics that often lead to the disintegration of traditional values. In this context, Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School serves as a concrete representation of how pesantren institutions can adapt and contribute positively to the formation of a moderate and tolerant generation.

When talking about the values of Aswaja, the principle of '*tawassuth*' or moderation is the core of the Aswaja worldview. Religious moderation does not mean reducing the intensity of religious practice, but rather being able to place religion as a relevant guide in all aspects of life without neglecting human and national values. In this context,<sup>8</sup> Aswaja values provide answers to two extremes that often arise: radical attitudes on one hand and liberal attitudes that tend to ignore religious norms on the other. The value of '*tasamuh*' or tolerance emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and appreciation for differences, both within the Muslim community and between different religious communities. This principle is relevant for maintaining the diversity of Indonesia as a pluralistic nation.

Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School, with its curriculum based on classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), makes Aswaja values the main foundation in shaping the character of santri. Through teaching books such as *Ta'limul Muta'allim*, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, and *Al-Hikam*, the santri are taught to understand the essence of Islam as a peaceful, balanced, and compassionate religion. Furthermore, the daily activities within the pesantren, such as regular religious study sessions, deliberations, and the tradition of *halaqah*, also serve as effective means for internalizing Aswaja values. In this process, the role of the pesantren leaders as role models (*uswah hasanah*) is key to the success of building religious moderation attitudes.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ihsanul Khuluk Zainudin and Abdul Muid, "Values of Multicultural Islamic Education at UPT SD Negeri 231 Gresik," *JASNA: Journal For Aswaja Studies* 5, no. 1 (2025): 43–58.

<sup>3</sup> Athoillah et al., "Policies and Practices Religious Moderation in Pesantren."

<sup>4</sup> Aep Kusnawan and Nani Machendrawaty, "Moderation of Religion in the Fatwa of Majelis Ulama Indonesia about the Ethics of Da'wah in the Digital Age," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 42, no. 1 (2022): 37–48, <https://doi.org/10.21558/jid.42.1.10904>.

<sup>5</sup> M P I Sigit Tri Utomo, S.S.M.P. Ana Sofiyatul Azizah, and S P Tri Ardianningtias, *Pendidikan Anti Korupsi Berbasis Aswaja* (Mata Kata Inspirasi, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> et. al Dr. H. A. Zaki Mubarak, *Kontekstualisasi Nilai-Nilai Aswaja Dalam Berbagai Sendi Kehidupan* (zakimu.com, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Sugandi Miharja et al., "Da'wah of Religious Moderation: The Public Perceptions of Government Policy in West Java," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 17, no. November (2023): 265–86, <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v17i2.22145>.

<sup>8</sup> M.A.L.L.M. Prof. Dr. K. H. Abu Yasid, *Paham Keagamaan Ahlulsunnah Wal Jama'ah (ASWAJA)*, Pedoman Bagi Warga NU Dan Umat Nusantara (IRCISOd, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Prof. Dr. K. H. Abu Yasid.

This background is an important foundation for understanding how pesantren can play a vital role in instilling Aswaja values. This research not only describes the educational process at Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School but also examines its impact on shaping the mindset and attitudes of the santri towards national issues, diversity, and tolerance.<sup>10</sup> This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with data collection methods including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The research is expected to contribute to the development of more adaptive pesantren educational models in response to the challenges of the times.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, pesantren as an Islamic educational institution has long been a basis for strengthening traditional values that are relevant to the context of modernity. In an increasingly heterogeneous society, the role of pesantren becomes more significant in addressing the need to form a character that balances religious obedience with social openness.<sup>12</sup> In this regard, Aswaja values not only serve as theological doctrine but also as a practical instrument for addressing the problems arising from rapid social change. For example, pesantren provides training for santri to understand the differences in Islamic schools of thought (*mazhab*), while also respecting other religious traditions. This is done through a dialogical approach that allows santri to learn to accept differences as a blessing, not as a threat.<sup>13</sup> In daily practice, Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School also serves as a social laboratory for santri to apply Aswaja values. Through various activities such as group discussions, conflict simulations, and community service, santri are encouraged to understand how religious moderation can be applied in real-life contexts.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the education at this pesantren is not only theoretical but also provides santri with direct experiences to become individuals capable of standing firm amidst the currents of globalization without losing their Islamic identity.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the Aswaja-based educational approach at this pesantren also involves spiritual and emotional aspects. The religious study sessions not only discuss the legal aspects of Islam but also sufistic values that emphasize purifying the heart and strengthening the relationship with Allah. This is essential in shaping attitudes of humility and empathy, which are the core of religious moderation. With this approach, santri are taught not to judge easily, but rather to focus on self-reflection and resolving conflicts peacefully.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, this article aims not only to provide an empirical overview of the implementation of Aswaja values but also to explore the relevance of these values in building a moderate, inclusive, and tolerant generation. The subsequent discussion will elaborate further on the dynamics of instilling Aswaja values, the challenges faced, and the strategies employed by Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School in internalizing these values in its santri. This study is expected to offer valuable contributions to the development of an Islamic education model that is not only relevant to local needs but also capable of making a global impact.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative methodology with a case study design to investigate the integration of Aswaja principles in fostering religious moderation among students at Rubath Al

<sup>10</sup> Ahmad Hermawan and Jesus Alberto Valero Matas, "Religious Moderation in Shaping Interfaith Relations: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and Malaysia," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya* 8, no. 2 (2024): 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v8i2.20273>.

<sup>11</sup> Yauma Trin Sunda and Agus Zaenul Fitri, "The Effect of Aswaja Values and Javanese Islam on Students' Moderate Islamic Thinking," *El Harakah* 24, no. 2 (2022): 301.

<sup>12</sup> Gustiana Isya Marjani, "Overcoming Theological Dilemmas: Fostering Religious Moderation through the Resolution of Faith and Rationality," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya* 7, no. 2 (2023): 115–28, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v7i2.28311>.

<sup>13</sup> Yundri Akhyar and Wirda Ningsih, "Deviations from the Teachings of Ma'had Al-Zaytun: A Review on MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council) Recommendations Toward Aswaja Ideology," *At-Ta'dib* 18, no. 2 (2023): 27–48.

<sup>14</sup> Mohammad Taufiq Rahman and Mulyana Mulyana, "Madrasah Teachers' Engagement in Promoting Religious Moderation," *Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 7, no. 1 (2024): 15–26, <https://doi.org/10.15575/hanifiya.v7i1.32737>.

<sup>15</sup> Nida Makfiyati et al., "Provision in Muslim Families: Dogma, Role Shifts, and Realities in Bali and Banten," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 12, no. 2 (2024): 131–39, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v12i2.40842>.

<sup>16</sup> Hamidulloh Ibda et al., "Islamic Moderation in Elementary School: Strengthening the Aswaja Annadhliyah Curriculum in Preventing Religious Radicalism," *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)* 18, no. 4 (2024): 1246–53.

Muhibbien Salafiyah Islamic Boarding School, Palembang. By utilizing a qualitative approach, the study seeks to uncover detailed insights into how Aswaja principles are embedded within the educational and cultural practices of the institution. The primary aim is to explore the mechanisms and obstacles encountered during the process of internalizing Aswaja values in the context of Salafi education. Emphasize that qualitative research facilitates a thorough examination of intricate phenomena within their natural environments, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter.<sup>17</sup>

The research focuses on the students and staff at Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School as its subjects, while the object is the institutional process of instilling Aswaja values. The school was chosen due to its significance in understanding Salafi educational approaches and their role in nurturing religious moderation.

Methods of Data Collection:

1. Interviews: Key participants, such as the school leader, educators, students, alumni, parents, and local community members, were interviewed to collect qualitative data. These interviews explored their perspectives and experiences regarding the application of Aswaja values, highlighting the successes, challenges, and overall effectiveness of these efforts.
2. Observations: The study involved observing specific activities, including spiritual lessons and student interactions, to gain practical insights into how Aswaja principles are manifested in everyday school life.
3. Documentation: The examination of relevant school documents, such as curricula, teaching aids, and policy guidelines, provided an understanding of the institutional strategies and resources employed to promote Aswaja values within the educational system.<sup>18</sup>

Ensuring Data Validity:

The study applied triangulation and member-checking techniques to verify the accuracy of the findings. Triangulation entailed the use of multiple sources, methods, and timing in data collection to validate results and enhance reliability.<sup>19</sup>

Data Analysis Approach:

Following the framework by Miles et al. (2014), the analysis included:

1. Data gathering: Collecting qualitative information through interviews, observations, and document reviews.
2. Data reduction: Filtering relevant data while eliminating extraneous information.
3. Data organization: Structuring the data into comprehensible formats, such as narratives or tables.
4. Drawing and verifying conclusions: Identifying recurring patterns or themes and validating the interpretations to ensure their credibility.<sup>20</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the instillation of Aswaja (Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah) values at Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School in Palembang City plays a significant role in shaping the religious moderation attitudes of santri. Through a qualitative approach with a case study method, it was found that the process of internalizing Aswaja values is not only manifested through formal teaching but also through habituation in daily activities. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation show that this pesantren consistently integrates Aswaja principles into the curriculum, mentorship, and social interactions within the pesantren environment.

### 1. Aswaja Principles as the Foundation of Religious Moderation

This study reveals that the instillation of Aswaja (Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah) values at Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School in Palembang City plays a significant role

<sup>17</sup> John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D*, 2nd ed. (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Lexy J Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, (No Title), Ed.Revisi. Cet.36. (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> M B Miles, A M Huberman, and J Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (SAGE Publications, 2014).

in shaping the religious moderation attitudes of santri. Through a qualitative approach with a case study method, it was found that the process of internalizing Aswaja values is not only manifested through formal teaching but also through habituation in daily activities.<sup>21</sup> Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation show that this pesantren consistently integrates Aswaja principles into the curriculum, mentorship, and social interactions within the pesantren environment.

The Aswaja principles taught at this pesantren include three main pillars: tawassuth (moderation), tawazun (balance), and tasamuh (tolerance). These three pillars are not only slogans but are also realized in various aspects of the pesantren's life. Tawassuth is taught through an approach to learning that emphasizes justice and balance in understanding religious teachings. The ustaz emphasize that being moderate means not leaning toward extremism, either in the form of radicalism or liberalism. This moderate attitude becomes an important foundation for building harmonious relationships, both within the Muslim community and with people of other faiths.

Tawazun, or balance, is applied in every dimension of the santri's life, whether in worship, study, or social interaction. In observing daily activities, santri are encouraged to balance their ritual obligations and worldly activities. This balance is realized through a strict but flexible daily schedule, allowing santri to meet academic and spiritual demands without feeling overwhelmed. In interviews with several santri, they expressed that this approach helps them understand that life is about setting priorities without neglecting any one aspect.<sup>22</sup>

Tasamuh, or tolerance, is instilled through various activities that encourage santri to respect differences. The pesantren often holds inter-mazhab discussions and dialogue sessions involving figures from various backgrounds.<sup>23</sup> In one observed discussion session, an ustaz gave an example of how differences in views within Islam are a mercy to be accepted with an open heart. The santri are encouraged to understand that differences are part of God's will, meant to test human patience and wisdom. The instillation of these values is also realized through regular study sessions and the tradition of reading classical texts, which are rich in Aswaja teachings. Books like "Ihya Ulumuddin" by Imam Al-Ghazali serve as key references in teaching. In study sessions, santri are taught to understand the context of religious teachings to avoid getting trapped in narrow textual interpretations. The ustaz often provide analogies and real-life examples to explain abstract concepts, making it easier for the santri to understand and apply Aswaja values.<sup>24</sup>

Santri are also encouraged to internalize Aswaja values through daily routines. One of the most prominent traditions is musyawarah (consultation or group discussion). In every decision-making process, whether academic or administrative, santri are actively involved.<sup>25</sup> This tradition trains them to listen to others' opinions, respect differences, and find the most just solution. In an interview, a senior santri mentioned that this tradition of musyawarah makes them feel more valued and increases their sense of responsibility for the decisions made together. The example set by the pesantren leaders and ustaz is also an important factor in the internalization of Aswaja values.<sup>26</sup> The ustaz at this pesantren are known as humble, patient, and wise figures. In interviews, some santri mentioned that they feel inspired by the ustaz's approach, which always prioritizes dialogue in resolving conflicts. This example motivates the santri to emulate the same attitude in their daily lives.

However, this study also found that the process of instilling Aswaja values is not without challenges. One of the main challenges is the influence of digital media, which often carries

<sup>21</sup> Abdul Wahab et al., "Synergy between the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Unisnu Jepara and the Management of the Special Branch of Fatayat NU Malaysia in Empowering the Da'wah of Aswaja An-Nahdliyyah," *Journal of Dedicators Community* 8, no. 3 (2024).

<sup>22</sup> M Tarwi and Farida Ulfi Naimah, "Implementasi Contextual Teaching and Learning Pada Pembelajaran Aswaja," *At-Tadzkir: Islamic Education Journal* 1, no. 1 (2022): 42–54.

<sup>23</sup> K H Muchotob Hamzah, *Pengantar Studi Aswaja An-Nahdliyyah* (LKIS Pelangi Aksara, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> Efendi Rahmat et al., "Globalizing Religious Moderation: Indonesia's Experience of Religious Moderation for the ASEAN and Global Contexts," *TEMALI: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial* 8, no. 2 (2025): 294–313, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jt.v8i2.45139>.

<sup>25</sup> Siti Solikhati et al., "Religious Moderation and the Struggle for Identity Through New Media: Study of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Congregation," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Lintas Budaya* 6, no. 2 (2022): 195–210, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v6i2.15058>.

<sup>26</sup> Demeiati Nur Kusumaningrum, "Strengthening Religious Moderation in the Digital Space Through Creative Works," *Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Kemuhimmadiyah* (JASIKA) 5, no. 1 (2025): 13–36, <https://doi.org/10.18196/jasika.v5i1.162>.

information that contradicts moderation values.<sup>27</sup> Unfiltered information on social media can affect the views of santri, especially those who lack strong religious knowledge. In one interview, an ustaz stated that the pesantren needs to be more proactive in providing digital education to the santri so they can filter useful information from harmful ones.<sup>28</sup> Another challenge is the diversity of the santri's backgrounds. Some santri come from families with religious understandings that differ from Aswaja values. This requires a more patient and inclusive approach to ensure that all santri can accept and internalize these values. The ustaz at this pesantren use a personal approach by giving special attention to santri who require more intensive guidance.<sup>29</sup>

Overall, this study shows that the Aswaja values taught at Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien have successfully shaped the religious moderation attitudes of the santri. Through a combination of formal teaching, habituation, and role modeling, this pesantren has created a conducive environment for the development of the santri's character.<sup>30</sup> However, the pesantren must continue to adapt to the changing times and new challenges to ensure that the values of moderation remain relevant and effective in shaping a tolerant and inclusive generation.

## 2. The Process of Cultivating Aswaja Values

### a. Formal Teaching

The process of instilling Aswaja values in the Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School can be dissected into several main elements. The first is formal teaching based on classical books (kitab kuning). This pesantren curriculum is explicitly designed to instill Aswaja values, with the main reference to the book "Ihya Ulumuddin" by Imam Al-Ghazali.<sup>31</sup> This book becomes a medium to teach the balance between sharia and Sufism, so that santri are able to internalize religious teachings holistically. In the researchers' observations, the ustaz also used thematic teaching methods that link the Aswaja concept with contemporary issues, such as cultural diversity in Indonesia and the challenges of globalization. This method helps santri understand the relevance of Aswaja values in a modern context.

This formal teaching is complemented by habituation in daily activities that become a means of internalizing Aswaja values naturally. Activities such as congregational prayers, wirid, tahlil, and dhikr together not only strengthen the spiritual dimension but also build solidarity among santri. In the researcher's observation, the atmosphere of togetherness in these activities creates space to instill the values of togetherness and mutual respect. In addition, the tradition of deliberation is one of the leading practices in this pesantren.<sup>32</sup> Deliberation is used as a mechanism to solve various problems, both academic and social, training santri to dialogue, accept differences, and reach agreements collectively.

The example of the ustaz and pesantren leaders is also a key element in instilling Aswaja values. The ustaz in this pesantren are known as fair, wise, and friendly individuals. This attitude indirectly shapes the character of santri who value dialog and avoid conflict. In interviews, some santri stated that they were inspired by the example of ustaz who were able to resolve differences of opinion in a peaceful and wise manner. This reinforces the view that role modeling is one of the most effective methods in shaping santri character.

However, this study also identified some challenges in the process of instilling Aswaja values. One of them is the influence of digital media that often presents information that is not in line with moderation values. Social media, with all its advantages, is also a challenge because it can spread

<sup>27</sup> Tarwi and Naimah, "Implementasi Contextual Teaching and Learning Pada Pembelajaran Aswaja."

<sup>28</sup> Luluk Akhmad Ainur Roziqin, Puspa Arum Yasinatul, Ali Mursyid Azisi and Fikri Zuhriyah, "THE CHALLENGE OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION AMIDST THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AMONG INSTANT USTADZ IN INDONESIA," *Al-Wasatiyyah* 3, no. 1 (2024): 63–92.

<sup>29</sup> Mujar Ibnu Syarif and Arip Purkon, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Bernegara Di Indonesia," *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 3 (2024): 16–23.

<sup>30</sup> M Mudhofi and Abdul Karim, "Transformation of New Media in Aswaja Al-Nahdliyyah Da'wah: Strategies and Challenges in the Contestation of Religious Authority in Indonesia," *Islamic Communication Journal* 9, no. 1 (2024): 133–46.

<sup>31</sup> Rohmadi Rohmadi and Muarifah Novarini Yupi Novarini Yupi, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Inklusif Perspektif KH. Abdurrahman Wahid," *MODERATIO: Jurnal Moderasi Beragama* 3, no. 2 (2023): 147–58, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32332/moderatio.v3i2.7532>.

<sup>32</sup> Siti Juhaeriyah, "Internalisasi Nilai Moderasi Beragama Sebagai Upaya Pencegahan Radikalisme Pada Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Qur'an Ath-Thabraniyyah," *Al-Hikmah* 8, no. 1 (May 2022): 131–36, <https://doi.org/10.30651/ah.v8i1.12981>.

ideologies that are contrary to Aswaja principles. Pesantren have begun to respond to this challenge by providing digital education to santri, but this approach requires further strengthening to ensure santri have adequate digital literacy skills.

In addition, the diversity of santri backgrounds is also a challenge. Santri who come from families with different religious understandings require a special approach in order to internalize Aswaja values properly.<sup>33</sup> The ustaz have adopted a personal approach, giving more attention to santri who need additional guidance, and creating an inclusive atmosphere that supports the acceptance of these values.

This study concludes that the Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School has succeeded in instilling Aswaja values in shaping the religious moderation of santri. Through a combination of formal teaching, habituation in daily activities,<sup>34</sup> and exemplary behavior, this pesantren is able to create an environment conducive to the development of santri character. However, pesantren must also continue to adapt to the times to face new challenges that arise, such as the influence of digital media and the diversity of santri backgrounds. With an innovative and inclusive approach, the moderation values taught in this pesantren can continue to be relevant and effective in forming a generation that is tolerant, inclusive, and full of wisdom.

#### **b. Habituation in Daily Activities**

The internalization of Aswaja values at Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School takes place intensively through habituation in daily activities. This habituation includes various activities that not only strengthen faith but also build solidarity, togetherness, and moderation character. The researcher observed that activities such as congregational prayers, wirid, tahlil, and dhikr together became a central part of the pesantren routine. These activities are designed to create a deep spiritual atmosphere as well as a place for social interaction that strengthens relationships between santri.

In interviews with several santri, they stated that the habit of worshipping together not only makes them more solemn but also helps them feel the warmth of the community. "When we recite the wirid together after prayer, it feels like there is a positive energy that strengthens our togetherness," said one senior santri. This activity is also complemented by light discussions led by the ustaz, where Aswaja values such as *tawassuth* (moderate) and *tasamuh* (tolerant) are often inserted in the explanation.

In addition to routine worship, non-academic activities are also a means to instill Aswaja values. For example, the pesantren routinely holds community service, which not only teaches the importance of cleanliness but also instills the spirit of mutual cooperation. In direct observation, it can be seen that the community service is carried out with enthusiasm by the santri. Ustaz often participates, providing a concrete example that this activity is a concrete manifestation of the application of Aswaja values in daily life. A young santri shared his experience, "We feel proud when we see the pesantren environment clean and tidy. We learn that keeping clean is part of faith."

The tradition of deliberation is also an important pillar in building moderation. On various occasions, santri are invited to deliberate in solving problems, both academic and social. This deliberation is carried out in a democratic atmosphere, where each santri is given the opportunity to express their opinions. This process teaches the importance of respecting differences, listening empathetically, and reaching a fair agreement. In one of the deliberation sessions observed, it was seen how the santri were able to dialogue with a cool head, despite the differences in views between them. An ustaz who led the deliberation emphasized the importance of adab in speaking, "Different opinions are natural, but we must maintain ukhuwah."

Deliberation is also applied in decision-making involving the management of pesantren activities. For example, when the pesantren designs a program to commemorate the Prophet's birthday, the santri are given the responsibility to propose ideas and design the concept of the event.

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<sup>33</sup> Abdul Azis et al., *Moderasi Beragama Berlandaskan Nilai-Nilai Islam*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama, 2021).

<sup>34</sup> Agus Akhmadi, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Keragaman Indonesia," *Inovasi-Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan* 13, no. 2 (2019): 45-55.

This not only trains them to think creatively but also strengthens their sense of responsibility and involvement in the community.

In addition, the pesantren pays special attention to character building through sports and art activities. Santris are invited to participate in sports activities such as soccer and badminton, which not only nourish the body but also instill the values of sportsmanship and teamwork. In the field of art, the pesantren organizes religious poetry reading and calligraphy competitions, which become an arena for expressing spiritual values creatively.<sup>35</sup> One of the ustaz who guided this activity said, "Creativity is a gift from God that must be utilized for positive things. Art can be a means to convey Aswaja messages in a more interesting way."

Observations also show that daily life in pesantren is filled with interactions that reflect tolerance and mutual respect. For example, when there are santri who come from different regions or cultures, the ustaz direct other santri to accept and embrace these differences. This is done by holding cultural introduction and discussion sessions, where each santri can share experiences and stories about their background. This step not only creates an inclusive atmosphere but also enriches santri's understanding of diversity.

When facing challenges, such as small conflicts between students, pesantren adopt an approach based on Aswaja values. Ustaz acts as a mediator, teaching santri to solve problems in a peaceful and wise way. In one of the cases observed, an ustaz led a mediation between two santri who had a disagreement. He quoted relevant Qur'anic verses and hadith to provide a religious perspective on the importance of forgiving each other. As a result, the two students not only reconciled but also learned to respect each other more.

This whole habituation process shows that Aswaja values are not only taught theoretically but also realized in the practice of daily life. The pesantren has succeeded in creating a conducive environment for the formation of moderate, tolerant, and balanced santri characters. This holistic approach makes santri not only understand Aswaja values intellectually but also internalize them in their attitudes and behavior. Thus, habituation in daily activities becomes an important element that strengthens the effectiveness of pesantren in instilling Aswaja values to santri.

### c. Exemplary from the Leaders and Ustaz

Exemplary behavior shown by pesantren leaders and ustaz is a fundamental element in the process of instilling Aswaja values in Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School. The fair, friendly, and wise characters that they display every day become a source of inspiration for santri to internalize moderation values in their lives. This exemplary behavior is not only evident in direct interactions but also in the way they respond to various challenges, both in aspects of learning and in daily life in the pesantren.

In observations, the ustaz consistently showed a patient and understanding attitude in assisting students. For example, when facing santri who have difficulty understanding the subject matter, they patiently provide re-explanations without showing frustration. One of the santri revealed that the ustaz's patient approach made him feel appreciated and motivated to learn better. "We feel that the ustaz not only teaches knowledge, but also sets an example of how to be kind to others," she said.

Pesantren leaders also play a significant role in creating a harmonious and inclusive environment. One of the policies observed was their open approach in dealing with issues of dissent. When there are discussions on sensitive topics, pesantren leaders always ensure that all parties have the opportunity to speak and be heard.<sup>36</sup> They provide a real example of how to dialogue respectfully, despite differences in views. A senior santri recounted his experience, "Kiai always emphasizes that every opinion is valuable, as long as it is delivered with adab and good intentions."

Moreover, this example is not only limited to intellectual aspects but also includes moral and spiritual dimensions. The ustaz are routinely involved in joint worship activities, such as congregational prayers, wirid, and tahlil. Their presence in these activities gives a strong message to

<sup>35</sup> Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama* (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

<sup>36</sup> Mohamad Fahri and Ahmad Zainuri, "Moderasi Beragama Di Indonesia," *Intizar* 25, no. 2 (2019): 95–100.

the santri that Aswaja values are not only taught, but also practiced in real life. "When we see the ustaz always present in the front row during congregational prayers, we feel inspired to be more disciplined in worship," said one of the santri.

In addition, the ustaz also demonstrated exemplary conflict resolution. In an interview, a santri recounted an incident where two santri were involved in a dispute. The ustaz who acted as a mediator not only resolved the problem in a peaceful manner but also provided learning to all parties involved. "He did not immediately blame anyone, but invited us to look at the root of the problem and find a solution together," the santri explained. This approach teaches students that conflicts can be resolved without confrontation, by prioritizing dialogue and patience.

Exemplary moderation is also evident in the way leaders and ustaz deal with issues of diversity. They often exemplify the importance of tolerance through historical stories about the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions who showed an inclusive attitude towards various groups.<sup>37</sup>In one of the lectures observed, an ustaz told the story of how the Prophet SAW respected his non-Muslim neighbors, as a form of invitation to santri to be tolerant in social life. This lecture not only provides theoretical understanding but also encourages santri to practice this value in their daily lives.

The pesantren leaders are also known as wise figures in facing the changing times. Amidst the challenges of globalization and the influence of digital media, they still adhere to the principles of Aswaja while adopting approaches that are relevant to current conditions. One of them is by providing education about digital literacy to santri. In an interview, an ustaz said, "We want santri to be not only spiritually intelligent but also able to respond to information critically and wisely. This is part of the teaching of tawassuth in a modern context."

The example set by the ustaz and pesantren leaders not only affects individual santri but also shapes the overall culture of the pesantren. In observations, an atmosphere full of values of justice, respect, and togetherness is reflected in various interactions in the pesantren. Santris help each other in daily tasks, respect differences, and show a humble attitude in communication. All of this is a reflection that Aswaja values have been well internalized, thanks to the consistent example of the ustaz and pesantren leaders. Thus, the example of the leaders and ustaz is not only an inspiration but also the main force in shaping the character of moderate, tolerant, and balanced santri. This example provides a solid foundation for santri to apply Aswaja values in their lives, both in the pesantren environment and in the wider community.

### 3. The Impact of Cultivating Aswaja Values

The results showed that the cultivation of Aswaja values has had a significant positive impact on the religious moderation of santri. The following are some of the impacts identified:

#### a. Tolerant Attitude in Religion

Santri show a more open attitude towards differences in mazhab and beliefs. They are taught not to judge others based on differences in views, but to find common ground that can strengthen brotherhood.

#### b. Critical Thinking Skills

Through discussion and deliberation-based learning, santri are trained to think critically in addressing religious issues. They are able to analyze various views objectively and choose the approach that is most in line with the principle of moderation.

#### c. Increased Social Solidarity

Aswaja values also encourage santri to be active in social activities, both inside and outside the pesantren. They are involved in various community programs, such as helping disaster victims, teaching Quran in villages, and participating in da'wah activities that promote peaceful messages.

<sup>37</sup> Rohmadi Rohmadi, "Deradikalisasi Paham Keagamaan Melalui Moderasi Beragama Pada Mahasiswa UIN Raden Fatah Palembang," *Tadrib* 7, no. 2 (2021): 211-26, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19109/tadrib.v7i2.9987>.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien plays a significant role in internalizing Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja) values to shape religious moderation attitudes among its santri. This internalization is achieved through three integrated mechanisms, namely formal instruction, habituation, and role modeling, which collectively form a comprehensive and contextually grounded approach to character education. The findings demonstrate that these mechanisms concretely manifest in the santri's daily conduct, reflected in their ability to respect diverse religious opinions, maintain interfaith harmony, engage critically with religious issues, and actively reject extremist ideologies. These outcomes affirm that traditional pesantren institutions remain highly relevant and effective in nurturing a moderate, tolerant, and socially responsible generation within Indonesia's pluralistic society. In a broader national context where religious polarization continues to pose significant social challenges, this pesantren model offers a meaningful and replicable contribution to efforts aimed at strengthening religious moderation among Muslim youth. This study also contributes empirically by presenting a detailed case study of Aswaja value internalization within a salafi pesantren setting, as well as theoretically by introducing a triadic internalization framework that may be adapted and applied in other Islamic educational institutions. However, the study acknowledges limitations, including its single-site qualitative design, potential social desirability bias in data collection, and the absence of longitudinal measurement to assess the long-term sustainability of moderate attitudes after santri leave the pesantren. Future research is therefore encouraged to conduct multi-site comparative and longitudinal studies, and to examine the influence of digital media on santri's religious moderation using quantitative or mixed-methods approaches.

## LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The research was conducted using a qualitative case study approach at a single institution, Salafiyah Rubath Al Muhibbien Islamic Boarding School in Palembang City, so the results may not be fully generalizable to other pesantren with different educational systems or cultural contexts. The data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving a limited number of participants, which may reflect subjective perspectives despite the use of triangulation techniques to ensure validity. In addition, the study was conducted within a specific time period, meaning the findings represent the conditions during the research and may change over time due to social dynamics and the rapid development of digital technology. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader samples, comparative studies across different pesantren, and mixed research methods to obtain more comprehensive results regarding the implementation of Aswaja values in shaping religious moderation.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

R conceptualized the study, designed the research framework, and led the manuscript writing. HS contributed to the literature review and data interpretation. AJA performed data collection through interviews and participatory observation. AAA assisted in data collection and document analysis. DO conducted thematic analysis and contributed to the results and discussion section. AK performed data validation through triangulation and assisted in manuscript revision. ZFSZ provided critical review of the manuscript, contributed to theoretical framing, and finalized the manuscript for submission. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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