



The role of educational innovation in strengthening religious moderation and social harmony

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ABSTRACT

Background: The cultivation of religious moderation remains a crucial issue in Indonesia due to the persistent occurrence of religious conflicts across the country. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of educational institutions in promoting tolerance and inclusivity, yet few have focused on the role of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Therefore, this study aims to explore the strategies and innovations implemented by Mathlul Huda Islamic Boarding School in fostering religious moderation among its students. **Methods:** This study employed a qualitative approach through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The analysis was guided by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and modeling. This theory served as the theoretical foundation to understand how moderate behaviors are transmitted through the daily practices of *kyai* (religious leaders), *ustadz* (teachers), and other influential figures within the boarding school community. **Findings:** The results revealed that innovation plays a vital role in the successful integration of religious moderation education in a traditional Islamic boarding school environment. Mathlul Huda Islamic Boarding School has effectively cultivated moderate and tolerant students by implementing a moderation-based curriculum, inclusive teaching strategies, and community engagement programs. The school's initiatives have contributed positively to building an inclusive and harmonious society that values diversity, tolerance, and respect. **Conclusion:** Mathlul Huda Islamic Boarding School has successfully implemented innovative strategies to promote religious moderation and tolerance among students, providing a model for other Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** This study presents a unique exploration of how traditional Islamic boarding schools can integrate modern approaches and social learning theory to promote religious moderation, offering new insights into the practical application of innovation in religious education settings.

KEYWORDS: innovation; religious moderation; islamic boarding school strategy.

1. Introduction

Religious moderation is a crucial concept in maintaining harmony and peace within Indonesia's diverse society. In Indonesia, the principle of religious moderation is not only an important foundation for creating a tolerant and peaceful environment, but also a response to religious diversity, which includes Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other traditional beliefs. As a long-standing and evolving issue, religious moderation challenges society to build tolerance and mutual understanding between religions (Iman,

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2019). More than just seeking interfaith harmony, this concept encourages recognition and respect for differences in beliefs and advocates universal values such as peace and justice. Although still faced with the challenges of radicalism and intolerance, religious moderation remains a major focus in efforts to maintain social stability and strengthen a pluralistic national identity in Indonesia (Machali, 2013).

Research on moderation has become an important issue in light of data showing that Indonesia still has high rates of religious conflict. Conflicts over places of worship remain a serious issue in Indonesia (Halim & Mubarak, 2020; Mayyasya et al., 2022; Suryawati & Syaputri, 2022). This indicates that religious moderation at the community level in Indonesia is still not well established, and sentiments related to intolerance remain high. Although there have been efforts to promote tolerance and build interfaith harmony, the controversies and conflicts that have occurred show that there are still major challenges in achieving these goals (Suryawati & Syaputri, 2022). Further steps are needed to increase understanding and acceptance of the values of religious moderation and to reduce the level of intolerance in society.

Data inputted by FKUB shows that dozens of cases of intolerance have occurred in Indonesia from 2019 to 2023. This information was conveyed by the Deputy Director of the Social and Cultural Directorate of Indonesian National Police Intelligence and Security Agency/*Badan Intelijen dan Keamanan Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia (Polri)*, Chaerul Yani, at the forum 'Empowering FKUB in Supporting the Success of the 2024 Elections in a Safe and Peaceful Manner in Jakarta' on Friday, 18 November 2023. From the data presented, there were 7 cases of intolerance in 2019, 14 cases in 2020, 11 cases in 2021, and 3 cases in 2022 (Ridwansyah, 2023). This data is certainly not comprehensive, as there are many conflicts involving religion that are not recorded in these statistics. Several factors that cause conflicts to go undocumented include a lack of openness in reporting minor cases, the reluctance of those involved to report incidents, and a lack of trust in the institutions that collect data (Abdullah et al., 2023). In addition, some cases are not reported due to political or social sensitivities at the local level, which hinder transparency in reporting and recording cases of intolerance (Diovani, 2021).

Pesantren, as one of the oldest and most influential Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, has an irreplaceable strategic role in instilling the values of religious moderation in students and the surrounding community (Huriani et al., 2022). In addition to functioning as a centre for formal education, Islamic boarding schools also serve as social and cultural institutions that integrate religious teachings with local values (Nasution, 2020). Through a structured curriculum and organised daily life, Islamic boarding schools are able to guide students in understanding religious teachings in a moderate and inclusive context. The central role of the *kyai* or pesantren leaders in determining the direction of education and the religious views of santri greatly influences their perspectives and attitudes towards religious diversity in society (Kesuma, 2014).

Islamic boarding school innovation strategies related to religious moderation include creative and effective approaches to implementing the values of moderation. Pesantren develop curricula that not only teach theological aspects of religion but also emphasise contextual and practical understanding of moderation (Abdullah et al., 2023). Active learning methods are used to practise the values of moderation in the daily lives of santri, while informal educational platforms such as lectures, group discussions, and community programmes are used to strengthen the understanding and practice of religious moderation (Huriani et al., 2022). This study aims to explore the strategies and innovations implemented by Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School in implementing religious moderation. Through a transformative and innovative approach, this boarding school has been able to make a significant contribution to shaping moderate attitudes among students and the community.

Research on religious moderation has been widely discussed. In 'Strengthening the Vision of Moderation within the Framework of Islamic Ethics: Its Relevance and Educational Implications' found that the values of moderation can be derived from a deep understanding of Islamic ethics, which refers to *maqasid as-syariah* and *umamah al-fada'il*, and that a

pesantren curriculum based on moderation must use a study and reconstructionist approach (Yahya, 2018). Awwaliyah (2020) in 'Islamic Boarding Schools as a Forum for Islamic Moderation in the Millennial Era' (2019) shows that the moderate or radical character of Islamic boarding schools is greatly influenced by their leaders (*kyai*). Furthermore, research Massoweang (2020) in 'Weaving Religious Moderation from the Pesantren Tradition' states that an effective pesantren education system includes the *khalafah* and classical systems, with religious moderation manifested through national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and adaptation to local culture.

This article then highlights how the transformation and innovation at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School has become a model for other Islamic educational institutions in building a more tolerant, inclusive, and harmonious society. The main messages conveyed include the importance of religious moderation in maintaining social harmony in Indonesia's multicultural society, the strategic role of Islamic boarding schools as educational agents that instil values of moderation in students and the community, and the transformation of the curriculum and socio-cultural approaches that are effective in actualising religious moderation.

This article provides examples of best practices that can be adopted by other Islamic educational institutions to foster moderation and tolerance, emphasising that religious moderation requires practical implementation through education, social activities, and a holistic cultural approach. By conveying this message, this article hopes to make a positive contribution to strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia and inspire other Islamic educational institutions to develop similar programmes for a more inclusive and harmonious society.

This study was conducted at the *Tahfidzul* Qur'an Mathlaul Huda Ambarawa Islamic boarding school in Pringsewu Regency, using a qualitative descriptive approach through interviews, observations, and literature studies to analyse the practice of religious moderation in the boarding school environment. Based on Bandura (1976) Social Learning theory, the educational process at the boarding school is understood as a social learning mechanism, where students internalise moderate values through the example set by the *kiai* and *ustadz*. This mechanism contributes to the formation of a balanced religious character while strengthening the socio-cultural resilience of Islamic boarding schools as centres for instilling values of tolerance and harmony in community life.

The argument underlying this study is that religious moderation is an important concept in the social and religious context in Indonesia (Nisa et al., 2021; Prihatin, 2020; Saumantri & Hajam, 2023). This argument includes the belief that the implementation of religious moderation can reduce inter-religious conflict, increase tolerance, and promote harmony in a religiously diverse society (Nisa et al., 2021). This research also assumes that Islamic boarding schools, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, play a crucial role in instilling values of moderation in students and in influencing society's views on religion (Aulia, 2022). Other assumptions may include that transformation and innovation in Islamic boarding schools can serve as a model for other Islamic educational institutions in developing effective strategies to foster moderate and tolerant attitudes among students and the wider community.

2. Methods

This research is a field study conducted in Pringsewu Regency, Lampung Province, with the *Tahfidzul* Qur'an Mathlaul Ambarawa Islamic Boarding School Foundation selected as the object of study. The reason for choosing this boarding school is because it is one of the boarding schools that has a long history of shaping the character of students in Pringsewu Regency. The research method used was descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques involving interviews with students and teachers, observation, and literature study. Data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection and processing in accordance with qualitative research methods, which included the stages of data collection,

data processing, and data analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of the practice of religious moderation in the pesantren (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

In this study, the researcher links to the theory of Social Learning, which was proposed by Albert Bandura, stating that people learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modelling. Pesantren can apply this theory by providing real examples of moderate attitudes through the behaviour of *kyai*, *ustadz*, and other figures in the pesantren environment. Santri are expected to imitate and adopt these moderate attitudes in their daily lives (Bandura, 1976).

3. Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school in Ambarawa has successfully implemented innovative strategies in religious moderation education. A moderation-based curriculum has been developed by combining religious education and general knowledge, whereby students not only gain a deep understanding of religious teachings but also skills and knowledge relevant to the needs of the modern world (Fahmi, 2021). Inclusive teaching methods are applied by adjusting teaching methods based on the individual needs of students, including the use of educational technology such as e-learning, instructional videos, and interactive applications. This allows students with varying learning abilities to keep up with and understand the material being taught (Sugianto & Diva, 2023).

In addition, community and social programmes at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School play an important role in instilling the values of religious moderation. Activities such as lectures, group discussions, and social service programmes involve students in direct interaction with the community, thereby strengthening their understanding and practice of moderation. Collaborative learning in small groups also encourages students to learn from one another, fostering a sense of togetherness and respect for differences of opinion. This approach not only helps students develop social and communication skills, but also shapes tolerant and inclusive attitudes (Nasution, 2020).

This study found that the use of technology in education contributes significantly to expanding access to knowledge and enriching the learning experience of students (Serrano et al., 2019). With these strategies, Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School demonstrates that religious moderation education can be effectively implemented in the context of traditional Islamic boarding schools, contributing positively to building an inclusive and harmonious society.

3.1 Pesantren strategies in religious moderation

3.1.1 Development of moderate-based curriculum

Historically, the Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school consisted of one central boarding school and two branch boarding schools. The central boarding school was led/supervised by KH. M. Mubalighin Adnan and Nyai Elok Faiqotul Hasanah, the Tarbiyatus Sibyan boarding school (branch I) is led by KH. Miftahusyain, and the Asy-'Ariyah boarding school (branch II) is led by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School is a boarding school that initially had Salafi characteristics, with flagship programmes in Al-Qur'an memorisation, calligraphy, and classical Islamic texts. Over time, this pesantren has developed by establishing formal education levels such as Madrasah Aliyah and Madrasah Tsanawiyah, as well as other educational institutions such as Early Childhood Education/*Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* (PAUD), Elementary School/*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI), Vocational High School, and College of Tarbiyah.

The development of a moderation-based curriculum at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School is evident through the integration of formal and non-formal education. Formal education includes Mathlaul Huda Early Childhood Education/*Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* (PAUD), Qur'an Elementary School/*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Qur'an* (MIQ), Islamic Junior

High School/*Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs), Islamic Senior High School/*Madrasah Aliyah* (MA), Ma'arif Ambarawa Vocational High School/*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* (SMK), and College of Tarbiyah/*Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah* (STIT). Meanwhile, non-formal education includes *Madrasah Al-Qur'an*, *Madrasah Diniyah*, *Tahfidz Al-Qur'an*, and Calligraphy Studio (Codingest, 2020).

In an interview, with the led of Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School emphasised the importance of developing a moderation-based curriculum in Islamic boarding school education. According to him, this curriculum must integrate the values of tolerance, justice, and peace with religious teachings to shape students who are inclusive and tolerant.

"A religiously moderate curriculum is important for creating a generation that appreciates diversity and respects differences" (KHM, the led of Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School).

He emphasised that the curriculum must be flexible and adaptive to the times in order to respond to new challenges in maintaining harmony in a multicultural society. A moderate-based curriculum is implemented by combining religious education and general knowledge. Religious education is taught through the study of classical Islamic texts and the Qur'an in non-formal settings, while formal education covers general subjects but retains the distinctive characteristics of Islamic boarding schools by incorporating religious learning. This strategy enables Islamic boarding schools to create a moderate educational environment, where students not only gain a deep understanding of religious teachings but also skills and knowledge relevant to the needs of the modern world. One student stated as follows.

"We are taught to respect differences and apply the values of moderation in our daily lives. In addition to studying religion, we also gain general knowledge that helps us understand the world outside the pesantren" (MKM, active student of Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School).

This student respondent emphasised how this balanced curriculum approach equips them to become tolerant and knowledgeable individuals. This moderate approach is reinforced through various innovative programmes that combine religious values with modern practices in education (Awwaliyah, 2019). Examples include the use of technology in learning, the development of inclusive curricula, and community programmes that emphasise tolerance and respect for differences (Nasution, 2020). The clerics and teachers at these Islamic boarding schools play an important role in implementing moderation strategies, both through formal teaching and extracurricular activities, to ensure that the values of religious moderation are internalised by students and applied in their daily lives.

With its strategy of innovation and transformation in a moderation-based curriculum, Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School not only contributes to shaping students with moderate and tolerant characters, but also serves as a model for other Islamic boarding schools in implementing the values of religious moderation to create a more inclusive and harmonious society (Maskuri et al., 2020).

3.1.2 Inclusive teaching methods

Inclusive teaching methods are a pedagogical approach that aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have equal opportunities to learn and develop. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this method is very important for instilling values of religious moderation that can embrace diversity and encourage tolerance (Maskuri et al., 2020). Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School, as one of the progressive Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, has adopted various inclusive teaching methods to support this mission.

The moderation-based curriculum at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School combines religious education through the study of classical Islamic texts and the Qur'an in a non-formal setting with formal education that includes general subjects while still integrating religious learning (Asrori, 2023). A student, revealed that this pesantren not only teaches tolerance and moderate values in daily life, but also helps students understand the complexities of the world outside the pesantren. The led of Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School emphasised the importance of this balanced curriculum in creating a generation that is moderate, tolerant, and ready to contribute to an increasingly multicultural and global society.

Furthermore, the inclusive teaching method at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School not only prioritises collective learning but also applies differentiated instruction to meet the individual needs of students (Maskuri et al., 2020). According to a student who is active in the Al-Qur'an memorisation programme, this approach is very helpful in deepening his understanding of the material he is learning.

"I feel helped by the additional materials and alternative teaching methods that are tailored to my learning style. The use of technology such as e-learning and interactive applications also makes learning more interesting and easier to understand." (A, active student of Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School).

With this approach, Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School not only develops the academic skills of its students, but also prepares them to better face the challenges of modern education. The inclusive teaching method at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School can be linked to Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. This theory states that people learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modelling (Bandura, 1976). In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this theory can be applied by providing real examples of moderate attitudes through the behaviour of *kyai*, *ustadz*, and other figures in the Islamic boarding school environment. Students are expected to imitate and adopt these moderate attitudes in their daily lives.

Collaborative learning at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School is recognised by an active student in the Al-Qur'an memorisation programme. According to him, dividing into small groups to complete tasks together has helped him to understand the material better.

"I feel that collaborative learning is very effective because we can learn from each other's experiences and knowledge. Additionally, working in groups also teaches us to respect others' opinions and collaborate to achieve common goals," (A, active student).

This experience not only enhances academic abilities but also fosters better social and communicative attitudes among the students. The inclusive teaching method at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School also involves continuous evaluation and constructive feedback to students. This evaluation is carried out in various ways, including written tests, projects, presentations, and direct observation (Khoiriah et al., 2023). The feedback provided focuses not only on academic achievement, but also on the personal and social development of students (Nisa et al., 2021). This helps students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and provides them with opportunities to improve and develop themselves.

3.1.3 Pesantren strategies in actualising religious moderation

Every educational institution, including Islamic boarding schools, which are the birthplace of Islamic scholars, certainly has methods or strategies for producing good cadres. The products produced will have an impact on the boarding schools that raised them. If a student is labelled as good by the community, it will indirectly bring prestige to the boarding school. Conversely, if a student receives a bad label in society or the country, the name of the boarding school will also be tarnished (Senja, 2017). The strategy of

boarding schools in producing students who are able to think moderately in religion is very vital (Awwaliyah, 2019). In this regard, the Mathlaul Huda Ambarawa Qur'an Memorisation Islamic Boarding School has several strategies that continue to be applied to this day to shape students who think moderately in order to avoid religious radicalism.

Firstly, Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school is very selective in accepting male and female teachers. The led of Mathlaul Huda emphasises that students' understanding is greatly influenced by their teachers' understanding. For example, if a hadith permitting the shedding of a Muslim's blood due to adultery, murder, or apostasy is interpreted literally by the teacher, then the students may misinterpret the law. The principle or the led of Mathlaul Huda has established specific criteria for the *asatidz/asatidzah* council: 1) the students must come from a salafiyah model pesantren, 2) the students must be proficient in reading classical Islamic texts, as these are taught in Javanese, and 3) teachers from outside the pesantren must adhere to the *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* school of thought.

Secondly, the formation of moderate Islamic thinking begins with new students. The majority of teachers at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School are alumni who continued their education at Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools recommended by the boarding school's leaders. The tradition at this pesantren emphasises teaching the basics of Islam and a correct understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith, especially to avoid misunderstandings that could lead to radicalism (Nasution, 2020). In new student classes, ustadz/ustadzah often discuss verses and hadith that have the potential to be misinterpreted, such as the concept of jihad. Ustadz/ustadzah explain the true meaning of jihad and correct misinterpretations of jihad, such as those used by extremist groups to justify suicide bombings. The main objective is to strengthen the students' beliefs and understanding of the correct interpretation of jihad so that the students can avoid misguided and harmful interpretations.

Third, holding *syawir* activities related to tolerance, pluralism, religious radicalism, jihad, and issues or polemics that arise in society. The aim is for santri to truly understand the real meaning and be able to develop a moderate attitude towards religion. Syawir itself is a term that is popular among Islamic boarding schools, especially at the Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School. Syawir is a discussion activity that discusses an issue to find the real answer based on strong arguments, namely the Qur'an, Hadith, and the books of scholars.

According to observations and interviews with students regarding the suicide bombings that often occur in Indonesia under the slogan of jihad, their answers were all the same. According to the students, what certain groups do in carrying out suicide bombings is an illogical mistake resulting from a shallow understanding of religious knowledge. In their view, their weak faith is exploited by others to carry out such harmful acts.

3.1.4 Scholarship in Islamic boarding schools and the moderate approach

As part of its strategy to strengthen religious moderation, the Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school teaches various classical texts that form the basis of the students' religious understanding. Details of these texts are presented in the following table 1. The table below shows that the various books taught at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School serve as important instruments in shaping and actualising religious moderation among students. Through the study of various disciplines and classical texts, santri are not only equipped with a deep and comprehensive understanding of religion, but are also guided to develop a wise attitude in responding to various religious issues within society. Thus, the teaching of texts at this pesantren becomes a strategic means of instilling values of tolerance, balance, and critical thinking rooted in the tradition of moderate Islamic scholarship.

The Islamic sciences that are still being developed and taught at the Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school to this day cover several fields. First, Arabic grammar (*nahwu shorof*). Nahwu studies the rules governing the endings of words in Arabic, both when the word stands alone (*mufrod*) and within a sentence (*murakkab*). Meanwhile, shorof studies the forms of word changes (Darwis, 2022). These two fields of study are very important in

Islamic boarding schools because it help students understand and interpret the Qur'an, Hadith, and the books of scholars correctly. Errors in Arabic grammar can lead to misinterpretation, so mastery of nahwu and shorof is key to avoiding radical thinking due to misunderstanding.

Table 1. Learning religious moderation through scripture

Field of Study	Textbook Taught
Arabic Grammar (<i>Nahwu</i> and <i>Shorof</i>)	Matan Jurumiyah, Mukhtasor Jidan, al-'Imriti, Alfiyah Ibnu Malik, Amshilatul Tashrifiyah, al-Maqshud fi al-'Ilmi as-Sharfi, Kaylani
Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence)	Mubadi Fiqih, Safinah an-Najah, Fath al-Qarib, Fath al-Mu'in, Bajuri, and other fiqh books
The Science of Faith and Morals	Aqidah al-Awam, Jawahir al-Kalamiyah, Akhlaq Lil Banin, Wasoya, Ta'limul Muta'lim
The Science of Tafsir and Hadith	Tafsir: Tafsir Jalalain, Tafsir Munir, Tafsir Ibn Kathir; Hadith: Arbain Nawawi, Bulugh al-Marom, Riyadh as-Shalihin, Mukhtar al-Hadith
Sufism	Syarah Hikam, Minhaj al-Abidin, Ihya Ulum ad-Din; as well as the practices of the Qadiriyyah wa Naqshbandiyyah Sufi orders
Islamic History	Khulasoh Nurul Yaqin, Sirah Nabawiyah

Second, fiqh or Islamic jurisprudence is one of the branches of Islamic scholarship that plays a central role in the pesantren education system. This discipline serves to study and understand Sharia law, the principles of Islamic law, and the rules that govern human life in various aspects, both worship and muamalah (Siregar, 2023). Through the study of fiqh, students are guided to learn the basics of Islamic law in a systematic and contextual manner, enabling them to practise their religion in a way that balances textual dimensions and social realities. At the Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School, the fiqh books used are generally the works of Shafi'i scholars, as is the tradition in Salafi Islamic boarding schools in general. The teaching of these books not only instils normative knowledge about Islamic law but also shapes a moderate and wise attitude in understanding differences of opinion among scholars and in dealing with the dynamics of religious life in society.

Third, the science of faith and morals is a field of study that serves to guide humans to have true faith in Allah and understand everything related to Him, while instilling noble moral values in their relationship with Allah (*hablun minallah*) and with fellow humans (*hablun minannas*). Through the study of this science, santri are guided to build a balance between theological and ethical aspects in religious life, so that faith does not stop at the doctrinal level, but is also manifested in civilised and empathetic social behaviour. The science of faith and morals thus plays an important role in shaping the character of santri to become individuals who are strong in faith, have good morals, are tolerant of differences, and have a deep understanding of religious and human plurality in the context of a multicultural society (Hidayat, 2015).

Fourth, the study of tafsir and hadith is a field of study that receives special attention at the Mathla'ul Huda Ambarawa Islamic boarding school because both are directly related to the main sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. Errors in understanding or explaining these two sources can have serious implications for a person's religious thinking and behaviour. Therefore, the process of learning tafsir and hadith at this pesantren is carried out with great care and meets certain academic standards, both in terms of the competence of the teachers, the suitability of the books used, and the intellectual readiness of the students. Teachers are required to have the ability to understand texts both textually and contextually, so the teachers are able to interpret religious meanings proportionally and in accordance with the developing social context. This approach is an important part of the pesantren's efforts to prevent narrow and rigid interpretations, as well as a strategy to instil a moderate, rational, and community-oriented view of Islam (Iqbal & Fudlali, 1994).

Fifth, Sufism. Sufism, which studies matters of the heart and relates to faith, is taught to senior students. If the heart is properly organised according to Sufi teachings, students will be far from radical thinking (Saebani & Hamid, 2017). Sufism is taught directly by the leader

of the Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school. Sixth, Islamic history plays an important role in providing santri with a deep historical understanding of the Prophet Muhammad's mission and the development of Islamic civilisation throughout history. Through historical studies, students are invited to learn about the roots of Islamic traditions, socio-religious dynamics, and the contributions of Muslims to the advancement of science and world civilisation. This understanding not only fosters a sense of love and pride as followers of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, but also shapes a historical awareness that Islam is a religion that upholds the values of peace, tolerance, and justice. Thus, the study of Islamic history at the Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school serves as a means of internalising the values of religious moderation, while also strengthening the identity of students as a generation capable of interpreting the legacy of Islamic history in the context of modern life in a wise and balanced manner (Susanto, 2013).

3.2 Innovations at Mathlaul huda islamic boarding school

3.2.1 Innovations in curriculum and learning methods

As an Islamic boarding school founded by alumni of boarding schools in Java and the Middle East, Pesantren Mathlaul Huda continues to teach Islamic knowledge based on the Ahlussunnahwaljama'ah understanding. The Salafi scholarly tradition taught by teachers KH. Ahmad Rais and KH. Ahmad Qusyairi is what is passed down and taught at this boarding school. It can be said that what is taught at this boarding school is what is taught at Salafi boarding schools in general (YPPTQ Mathla'ul Huda Ambarawa, 2024). The Salafi model of learning is still applied today, and daily lessons still use classical texts, sorogan, bandongan, and other classical learning methods. However, because KH. Ahmad Rais was an alumnus of a Middle Eastern educational institution who also specialised in the arts (calligraphy, painting, and music), it was his expertise in the arts that attracted students to seek religious education at this boarding school.

The Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school has implemented innovations in its curriculum and teaching methods by combining the scientific traditions of salafiyah with relevant modern aspects. While still using classical texts and teaching methods such as sorogan and bandongan, this boarding school has also introduced new elements such as e-learning and interactive educational applications (Hanun, 2018). Its inclusive curriculum allows for the adjustment of teaching methods based on the individual needs of students, enabling them to develop their potential optimally in a supportive environment (Fahmi, 2021). This approach aims not only to strengthen religious understanding but also to develop practical skills relevant to the demands of the times.

Collaborative learning methods are also one of the innovations implemented at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School. Students are often grouped into small teams to complete tasks or projects together, which not only improves their understanding of the subject matter but also strengthens cooperation among students. This approach encourages them to learn from one another, respect differing opinions, and develop social skills and communication abilities (Maulana, 2023). As a result, the boarding school is not only a place to deepen religious knowledge but also a platform to hone individual skills in preparing to face challenges in the modern world.

3.2.2 The use of technology in moderate education

The Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school also acknowledges that the use of technology in the context of moderation education plays a significant role in exploring and spreading values of tolerance and inclusive understanding of diverse religious perspectives (Al Jauzi & Hamidah, 2023). Like many other educational institutions, this pesantren uses technology as a tool to expand access to religious knowledge and support more interactive and efficient learning.

Through the integration of digital platforms into their curriculum, Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School facilitates in-depth collaborative learning about the values of moderation in religion. Students can access learning materials independently while remaining connected to the guidance and direction of educators (Assiroji, 2020). This not only enriches their learning experience but also enables them to develop a critical and reflective understanding of religious and social issues.

The use of technology has also expanded the reach of this Islamic boarding school, enabling them to interact with a wider audience, including the general public and global communities (Fabriar, 2024). Thus, Pesantren Mathlaul Huda plays an important role in supporting peace and interfaith understanding at the local and global levels, making technology a vital tool in their progressive educational mission.

Islamic boarding schools that utilise technology in moderate education often integrate digital platforms to optimise the learning process. The boarding schools use these platforms not only to present lesson material in a more dynamic and interactive way, but also to encourage in-depth group discussions between students and educators. Through features such as online forums, video conferencing, and collaborative learning platforms, Islamic boarding schools can facilitate joint exploration of the values of moderation in religion in a more structured and in-depth manner. This approach not only expands students' access to diverse educational resources, but also enables them to develop a more holistic and relevant understanding of how religious values can be applied in daily life in a moderate and inclusive manner (Tohet & Alfaini, 2023).

One concrete example of the use of technology at Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School is the integration of an online platform into their curriculum. This platform allows students to study independently while remaining connected to guidance and supervision from their teachers. The students in the interview emphasised that technology is not just an additional tool, but has become an integral part of their learning process. This supports the development of critical and reflective understanding of religious and social issues, enabling students to explore the values of moderation in religion more deeply and apply them in their daily lives.

3.2.3 Community and social programmes

The community and social programmes at the Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school are a key pillar in shaping the character and social awareness of their students. In addition to focusing on academic and religious development, the boarding school actively organises various activities aimed at strengthening social bonds and values of togetherness among students. The school regularly hold social activities such as community service with the surrounding community, participate in religious activities in the community, and initiate various other social projects that teach the importance of contributing positively to the surrounding environment (Farida et al., 2023).

Activities such as these not only teach students to care about the needs and aspirations of the surrounding community, but also reinforce the values of empathy, teamwork, and social responsibility (Sugianto & Diva, 2023). By involving students in meaningful community activities, Mathlaul Huda not only shapes individuals committed to religious values but also prepares them to become caring and capable leaders in building a harmonious and inclusive community life.

In addition, the community programme at Mathlaul Huda also involves leadership and social skills training for their students. Students are not only encouraged to participate in formal social activities such as community service and religious activities in the community, but are also encouraged to take independent initiatives in supporting public welfare. Through this approach, Islamic boarding schools function not only as religious educational institutions, but also as centres for building strong and responsible character in a broader social context. The boarding school equip students with the leadership skills necessary to become agents of positive change in society, making them active contributors to the advancement of values of justice, empathy, and social service in everyday life.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, the important findings of this study show that the Mathlaul Huda Islamic boarding school in Ambarawa has successfully integrated comprehensive religious moderation education through the development of a curriculum based on moderate values that are adaptive to the socio-religious context. This integration not only emphasises the mastery of in-depth religious knowledge, but also the internalisation and practice of moderate values in the daily lives of students. Inclusive and participatory learning strategies have proven to be able to accommodate individual learning needs, while strengthening the process of shaping students' characters to be tolerant and open to differences. In addition, the application of innovative learning methods, the strengthening of social-community programmes, and the use of technology in the educational process show that Islamic boarding schools are able to adapt to the dynamics of modernity without leaving behind their Islamic traditions. Thus, Mathlaul Huda Islamic Boarding School not only plays a role as an institution for the transmission of religious knowledge, but also as a centre for strengthening social and cultural resilience based on moderate values. Academically, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of interdisciplinary studies on Islamic education and religious moderation, emphasising that a holistic approach that combines cognitive, affective, and social dimensions is key to building an inclusive, harmonious, and civilised society.

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Author Contribution

In the preparation of this research, there were three main contributors who played an important role in the completion of this scientific work. First, S.U. played a significant role in the process of collecting field data through interviews with competent and relevant sources, thereby producing empirical information that supported the validity of the research. Second, I.N. was responsible for preparing the research manuscript and translating documents into English for academic publication. Third, A.Y. contributed by providing substantive input and editing and proofreading the manuscript to ensure the perfection of the structure, argumentation, and clarity of the writing as a whole.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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During the preparation of this work, the authors used Grammarly to assist in improving grammar, clarity, and academic tone of the manuscript. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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