



FROM EXEMPLARITY TO TRADITION: THE DIALECTICS OF CONSTRUCTING RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN PESANTREN

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Abstract:

This study examines how religious moderation education is constructed at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate using Peter L. Berger's social construction theory. A qualitative descriptive-analytical approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using Berger's three-stage dialectical framework: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. The findings reveal that religious moderation construction occurs through interconnected dialectical processes. Externalization manifests through the kyai's charismatic exemplarity and comprehensive pesantren regulations. Objectivation involves inter-generational interactions that institutionalize values through the concept of barakah and habitualization processes. Internalization integrates universal Islamic teachings with Ternate local wisdom, particularly the "*torang basudara*" brotherhood tradition, creating contextual religious moderation that resonates with students' cultural identities. The study demonstrates that religious moderation is not a fixed concept but a continuous social construction involving complex interactions among institutional structures, charismatic authority, peer relationships, and cultural resources. This research contributes empirical evidence showing how pesantren successfully translate abstract theological concepts into lived practices through holistic socialization processes, offering insights for developing contextually appropriate religious moderation education models.

Keywords: *Social Construction, Religious Moderation, Islamic Boarding School, Wasathiyah, Local Wisdom.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools, known as pesantren, represent the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and hold a strategic role in shaping students' character and religious understanding (Dhofier, 2011; Mastuhu, 1994). Amid increasingly complex religious life dynamics, pesantren are expected to be at the forefront of realizing the teachings of Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin*, mercy to all worlds, by taking the middle path or *wasathiyah* in building religious

moderation in Indonesia (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Zakariyah et al., 2022). This expectation places pesantren in a unique position as institutions that not only transmit religious knowledge but also form moderate religious attitudes and behaviors among their students.

Religious moderation, known in Arabic as “*wasathah*” or “*wasathiyah*,” signifies being balanced or in the middle (Sugianto et al., 2024). In Latin, moderation derives from “*moderatio*,” meaning self-control or mastery (Bahri et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, which comprises a diverse society with multiple religions, ethnicities, and cultures, religious moderation becomes critically important (Daffa & Anggara, 2023). It can be realized through a comprehensive teaching approach that encompasses individual diversity while referring to sacred texts such as the Qur’an and Hadith, while simultaneously considering the importance of reason as a solution to encountered problems (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Seftika Nur Asyiah et al., 2025). This balance between textual adherence and rational consideration constitutes the essence of religious moderation that pesantren seek to cultivate.

The concept of religious moderation involves maintaining equilibrium between adhering firmly to religious principles and demonstrating flexibility in interpreting and applying these teachings (AR, 2020; Mala & Hunaida, 2023). Moderate Islamic education is expected to realize meaningful change amid diverse social contexts, strengthen Islamic educational institutions, and serve as a center of Islamic civilization in Indonesia (Bahri et al., 2025; Mujahid, 2021). However, despite the significant role of pesantren in building religious moderation, the process of constructing this understanding within these institutions requires deeper examination. How do pesantren build collective understanding and practices of religious moderation among their students? What social processes underlie the formation of moderate religious attitudes in the pesantren environment? These questions necessitate systematic investigation to understand the mechanisms through which religious moderation is constructed and maintained.

This study aims to analyze the construction process of religious moderation education at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate using Peter L. Berger’s social construction theory. Specifically, this research seeks to identify the dialectical stages of externalization, objectivation, and internalization in forming religious moderation understanding among *santri*, and to examine the role of local wisdom in supporting religious moderation education at the pesantren. The choice of Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate as the research site is particularly significant given its unique characteristics in implementing religious moderation education integrated with Ternate local traditions, providing rich insights into how universal Islamic values dialogue with specific cultural contexts.

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s social construction theory provides a robust framework for understanding how religious moderation is built as a social reality within pesantren. They posit that the relationship between humans and society occurs through dialectical processes involving three interconnected stages. The first stage, externalization, refers to individual adaptation to the social and cultural world as a product of human interaction. It constitutes a form of self-expression to strengthen individual existence in society, where society is viewed as a human product. The second stage, objectivation, involves meeting human needs in various aspects of life through the use of tools and materials, as well as creating significant signs that are agreed upon and considered legitimate by community groups. At this stage, institutionalization

and legitimation occur, making society a *sui generis* reality. The third stage, internalization, involves internalizing objective reality into the individual, transforming it into subjective reality through primary and secondary socialization processes, enabling individuals to become full members of society.

The application of this theory to pesantren contexts reveals how religious moderation transforms from abstract theological concepts into lived social practices. Clifford perspective viewing religion as a cultural system further enriches this understanding by showing how religious moderation can be understood as a cultural system manifested in various traditions that blend religious teachings with local wisdom (Geertz, 2013). In this context, religious moderation is not merely about theological doctrine but encompasses practices, symbols, and meanings that are collectively constructed and maintained through ongoing social interactions within the pesantren community (Huda, 2024; Setinawati et al., 2025).

This research contributes to deeper understanding of the social processes underlying the formation of moderate religious attitudes in pesantren contexts. The findings can serve as references for other pesantren in developing religious moderation education models based on local wisdom, while enriching academic literature on the application of social construction theory in Islamic educational contexts. Moreover, this study has practical implications for policymakers in designing contextually appropriate religious moderation education programs that respect and utilize local cultural resources rather than imposing uniform approaches across diverse Indonesian regions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to obtain in-depth understanding of the religious moderation education construction process at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate from participants' perspectives (Haven et al., 2020). The qualitative approach was chosen due to its capacity to explore complex social phenomena, capture rich contextual details, and understand meanings that participants attribute to their experiences. This methodological choice aligns with the study's objective to understand the dialectical processes through which religious moderation is socially constructed within the pesantren community.

The research was conducted at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate, located in North Maluku Province, Indonesia. This pesantren was selected purposively due to its unique characteristics in implementing religious moderation education integrated with Ternate local traditions. The pesantren's long history, strong ties with the local community, and distinctive cultural context rooted in the Ternate Sultanate traditions make it an ideal site for examining how universal Islamic values interact with specific local cultural elements in constructing religious moderation.

Research participants consisted of multiple stakeholder groups to ensure comprehensive data collection. These included the kyai as pesantren leader and caretaker, whose central role in shaping the pesantren's educational philosophy and practice is crucial; pesantren administrators who manage daily operations and implement policies; teachers or teachers who directly interact with students in educational settings; students or santri from various generations, providing perspectives on how religious moderation is experienced and internalized at different stages; alumni representatives who can reflect on the long-term impact of pesantren education; and surrounding community members who interact with

the pesantren and can provide external perspectives. Participant selection used purposive sampling technique based on their involvement and understanding of religious moderation education at the pesantren, ensuring that those with rich, relevant experiences were included in the study (Campbell et al., 2020).

To protect participant confidentiality and maintain consistency in data presentation, all interviewees were assigned pseudonyms based on the order of their interviews (e.g., Informant 1, Informant 2, etc.). These identifiers are used throughout the findings section when quoting or referring to participants' responses. Where relevant, general descriptors such as participant roles (e.g., teacher, student, administrator) are also provided to give context to the perspectives shared, without compromising anonymity. This approach aligns with ethical standards in qualitative research and supports clear attribution of insights.

Data collection involved three complementary methods to achieve triangulation and enhance research validity (Zahle, 2023). First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with *kyai*, administrators, teachers, and *santri* to explore their perceptions, experiences, and understandings regarding religious moderation education construction. Interview questions were designed to elicit detailed narratives about participants' experiences while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes. Second, participant observation was conducted to directly observe daily educational activities and life at the pesantren, including congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, yellow book studies, social interactions among *santri*, and community involvement activities. This observational data provided insights into actual practices and behaviours that might not be fully captured through interviews alone. Third, document analysis was performed on pesantren regulations, activity schedules, educational curricula, and other relevant documents to understand the formal structures and policies that shape pesantren life.

Data analysis utilized Peter L. Berger's social construction framework, involving systematic processes of data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing (Huberman & Miles, 1983). During data reduction, raw data from field notes and interview transcripts were carefully selected, focused, and simplified to identify patterns relevant to the three dialectical stages of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Data display organized the information in patterns that clearly reflect these processes, using matrices, charts, and narrative descriptions to identify relationships and patterns within the data. Conclusion drawing and verification involved developing interpretations about religious moderation construction processes and verifying these interpretations through data triangulation from various sources, ensuring that conclusions were grounded in multiple forms of evidence.

Research trustworthiness was ensured through several strategies consistent with qualitative research standards. Prolonged engagement at the research site allowed the researcher to develop rapport with participants and gain deep understanding of the pesantren context. Data triangulation from various sources, including interviews, observations, and documents, provided multiple perspectives on the same phenomena, strengthening the credibility of findings (Meydan & Akkaş, 2024). Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants and soliciting their feedback to ensure that interpretations accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives (Thomas, 2017). Peer debriefing with fellow researchers provided opportunities to discuss emerging findings, challenge interpretations, and refine analytical frameworks.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process, with all participants providing informed consent after receiving clear explanations about research purposes, procedures, potential risks, and their rights. Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms where appropriate and securely storing data.

RESULTS

The construction of religious moderation education at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate follows three dialectical stages in accordance with Peter L. Berger's social construction theory: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. These stages are not discrete or sequential but rather constitute an ongoing, interconnected process through which religious moderation is continuously constructed, maintained, and transmitted within the pesantren community.

Externalization: Students' Adaptation to Pesantren's Socio-Cultural World

The externalization process at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate manifests prominently in how students adapt to the pesantren's socio-cultural environment through two primary mechanisms: the kyai's exemplarity and pesantren regulations. These mechanisms work synergistically to introduce santri to the values, practices, and worldview that characterize moderate Islamic education.

Internal Adaptation: The Kyai's Exemplarity

Character formation of santri at the pesantren is fundamentally inseparable from the figure of the kyai as caretaker, whose presence permeates every aspect of pesantren life. Naturally, santri behaviour tends to emulate figures present at the pesantren, particularly the kyai's behaviour, who consistently serves as a role model and possesses profound authority in all santri's eyes. This authority is not merely formal or administrative but deeply spiritual and moral, rooted in the kyai's extensive religious knowledge, pious lifestyle, and demonstrated commitment to Islamic values.

One informant articulated this dynamic clearly, stating that "here, the Kyai serves as a figure for all santri. Every word and action of the Kyai becomes a reference and standard for all pesantren residents. Even the Kyai's figure determines whether the community will enroll their children or not" (Informant 1, interview, 2024). This observation underscores the kyai's centrality not only within the pesantren but also in broader community perceptions of the institution's quality and legitimacy. The Alumni of Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate reinforced this perspective, explaining that "a simple measure of how the community views pesantren quality depends on its leadership. If in the community's eyes the Kyai has become a role model, then the community will be devoted to the pesantren and willing to enroll their children there" (Informant 2, interview, 2024).

Religious moderation education conducted at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate is fundamentally based on exemplarity demonstrated by the Kyai as leader and caretaker. *Santri* view the Kyai as an exemplar in all aspects of daily life at the pesantren, including worship practices, implementation of religious values, and good behaviour in social interactions. The Kyai holds a central role in religious moderation education at the pesantren precisely because his attitudes and behaviours are highly regarded and closely observed. Through his consistent daily conduct in congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and maintaining

polite and courteous attitudes when interacting with fellow *santri* and the surrounding environment, the Kyai demonstrates how to practice Islam moderately, firmly holding religious principles while remaining flexible and tolerant toward differences.

Santri position the Kyai as a figure possessing both authority and wisdom in guiding them to understand and implement religious moderation. Through continuous monitoring and guidance, the Kyai plays a crucial role in shaping santri's mindset and behavior to align with moderation values in religion. This includes developing balanced understanding of religious teachings, emphasizing tolerance, promoting inter-religious harmony, and firmly rejecting extremism in all its forms. The kyai's influence extends beyond formal teaching moments to encompass informal interactions, personal consultations, and the subtle ways in which he navigates complex religious and social issues, always modelling moderation and balance.

External Adaptation: Pesantren Regulations

Complementing the *kyai's* exemplarity, pesantren regulations constitute the second major mechanism in the externalization process. Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate serves as a residence for santri to deepen religious knowledge, functioning as a second home after their parents entrust them to the pesantren. *Santri* are systematically fostered to live independently and adapt to the comprehensive pesantren environment. All *santri* activities are carefully regulated, including congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, group study sessions, yellow book studies, and even sleeping hours. This comprehensive regulation requires consistent implementation by administrators to effectively guide santri in carrying out all pesantren activities according to established norms and schedules.

Beyond fostering independence, *santri* are also cultivated to socialize effectively with others to maintain brotherhood throughout their time at the pesantren. The pesantren's overarching function is to create and develop santri personalities capable of playing active roles in modern society through integrated educational, religious, social, and economic functions. The pesantren becomes the primary institution for educating santri comprehensively, not merely teaching religious knowledge but also instilling good ethics and politeness toward fellow santri, elders, and juniors, while training them to manage their finances responsibly and make sound decisions independently.

The externalization process becomes evident in how *santri* adapt to Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate regulations. Santri gradually realize that as students residing in this religious educational institution, they are not free to act according to their individual desires. They are appropriately constrained by regulations and pesantren culture that have existed for extended periods and are respected by all *santri* across generations. These pesantren regulations are understood not only by the entire pesantren community but also by santri guardians and the general *public*, who recognize the necessity and value of such structures in achieving educational objectives.

The wider community and *santri* guardians demonstrate full understanding and support for pesantren regulations. For them, it is entirely natural and expected that pesantren as religious institutions maintain clear regulations aimed at forming santri character and training their independence. This collective recognition and support for pesantren regulations reflect broader social acceptance of the pesantren's educational philosophy and methods. The

regulations are not perceived as arbitrary restrictions but as necessary structures that guide *santri* toward becoming well-rounded individuals with strong religious foundations, ethical behavior, and practical life skills.

Objectivation: Institutionalization of Religious Moderation Values

At the objectivation stage, the institutionalization process of religious moderation values occurs through intensive social interaction and systematic habituation within the Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate environment. This complex process involves several interconnected dimensions through which individual understandings and practices gradually transform into collective realities accepted and considered legitimate by the entire pesantren community.

Institutionalization of Arguments and Values

Following initial interactions with the surrounding environment, *santri* develop a natural desire to conform to other *santri* around them, even when encountering practices they have never previously experienced. One *santri* articulated this adaptation process thoughtfully, explaining that “as a *santri* at this pesantren, I must adapt to the rules and traditions of the pesantren. If previously we were accustomed to our own ways of living while still at home, here I must begin adapting to the pesantren’s provisions. As *santri*, our parents have entrusted us to the pesantren to be educated, so we must obey and submit to the pesantren’s regulations by performing all activities independently, from washing, eating, school preparation, and safeguarding personal belongings” (Informant 3, interview, 2024)

What begins as merely following other *santri*’s habits gradually evolves into deeper conviction. *Santri* progressively develop the perspective that pesantren traditions are genuinely beneficial for training independence and will positively impact their capacity for sustainable independent and responsible living when they eventually become integrated members of broader society. This transformation from external compliance to internal commitment represents a crucial stage in the objectivation process, where practices initially adopted for conformity become valued for their intrinsic worth and practical benefits.

Solidarity among *santri* at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate remains remarkably intact despite differences in cohorts and across generations. Independence at this pesantren has long existed as a cherished value among *santri* and administrators residing at the institution. Every new *santri* entering this pesantren typically emulates and looks up to senior *santri* and administrators at the pesantren, who serve as accessible role models demonstrating how to navigate pesantren life successfully. Administrators and teachers residing at the pesantren are thoroughly accustomed to independence and readily accompany and teach new *santri* to become independent as well, creating a supportive environment for learning and growth. Gradually and naturally, junior *santri* begin following, emulating, and adapting to pesantren regulations through this organic mentorship process. At this stage, junior *santri* actively build positive interaction and communication with senior *santri* as well as administrators and teachers present in the Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate environment, creating foundations for emulating and becoming accustomed to independent living habits.

Institutionalization of Objectives and Benefits

The institutionalization process among *santri* plays a significant role in maintaining values, principles, and traditions contained in Pesantren Darul Falah

Ternate regulations. These values become critically important foundations for the pesantren's survival and continuity, making *santri* fully conscious and genuinely reluctant to violate these regulations. Regulations in effect within the pesantren environment become foundations guiding *santri* life comprehensively, creating balance and harmony in carrying out daily activities. Through the institutionalization process, these regulations transform into norms thoroughly internalized by *santri* as integral parts of their identity and life practices at the pesantren.

One administrator articulated the comprehensive nature of these expectations, stating that "independent behaviour at the pesantren, such as washing clothes, maintaining cleanliness, properly safeguarding personal belongings, preparing study needs, and following all scheduled pesantren activities, constitute essential parts of pesantren regulations" (Informant 4, interview, 2024). These seemingly mundane activities carry deeper significance as practices that cultivate discipline, responsibility, and self-reliance. In its development, *santri* at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate demonstrate strong adherence to traditional values accommodative of pesantren regulations. Belief in the concept of barakah, or divine blessing, remains quite strong among *santri*. They maintain faith that compliance with pesantren regulations will positively impact their future, and that behaviour cultivated at the pesantren will consistently carry over into their personalities after graduating from the institution.

One informant elaborated on this perspective, explaining that "*santri* who obey rules during their time at the pesantren usually experience positive impacts in their lives after graduation. On average, they succeed and benefit society. This is not merely because they are intelligent but more fundamentally due to barakah values" (Informant 5, interview, 2024). This belief in barakah serves as a powerful legitimizing force that motivates *santri* to voluntarily internalize and uphold pesantren norms even when external supervision might be limited. Thus, *santri* at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate build inter-*santri* interactions characterized by traditions of obedience and compliance toward existing regulations and traditions. There exists widespread belief among *santri* that regulations existing at the pesantren serve genuinely good purposes and constitute effective means to obtain barakah and future success.

Habitualization Process

After consciousness regarding regulations and traditions at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate develops fully, these traditions and activities become integral parts of habitualization, representing a pronounced tendency to perform activities automatically in daily life without requiring explicit instruction from others. At this advanced stage, *santri* understand regulations and traditions existing in the pesantren environment with considerable depth. Through sustained interactions, accumulated experiences, and consistent habituation occurring during their residence at the pesantren, they gradually but thoroughly internalize and adopt activities that become defining features of pesantren life.

One informant described this phenomenon vividly, noting that "when prayer time arrives, *santri* automatically prepare themselves and immediately gather at the mosque for congregational prayer. Similarly, when study time arrives, whether at school or pesantren learning sessions, *santri* automatically gather according to their designated learning levels" (Informant 6, interview, 2024). This automatic compliance reflects how deeply pesantren rhythms and

expectations have become embedded in *santri* consciousness and behavior. One dormitory supervisor provided additional insight, explaining that “*santri* at the pesantren have become thoroughly accustomed to living independently and maintaining responsibility for the cleanliness and orderliness of their living environment. This becomes evident every holiday, when they independently take initiative to carry out several important activities, including washing their own clothes voluntarily and without direct orders from administrators or teachers” (Informant 7, interview, 2024).

By independently washing their own clothes, *santri* learn valuable lessons about independence and personal cleanliness that extend far beyond mere housekeeping. Besides washing clothes, *santri* also engage meaningfully in community service to maintain dormitory room and pesantren environment cleanliness. They clean bedrooms, make beds, sweep and mop floors, and clean areas around the pesantren with care and attention. All this is performed collectively, with each *santri* contributing according to their ability and designated responsibility. Through involvement in activities like washing clothes and community service, *santri* not only learn about physical cleanliness and environmental orderliness but also develop profound values of togetherness, teamwork, and genuine sense of ownership toward their shared living environment. In social interaction, whatever habits possessed by *santri* grow into actions thoroughly accepted and understood by all, fundamentally based on obedience to pesantren regulations that has evolved into a cherished tradition upheld throughout their time in the pesantren environment.

Internalization: Inheritance of Religious Moderation Values

At the internalization stage, individuals have developed strong attachments to their new lives within the pesantren community. Genuine acceptance occurs within them, and they demonstrate clear capacity to successfully navigate their new lives at the pesantren. They have come to regard life at the pesantren as authentic reality within themselves, not as temporary adaptation but as meaningful existence that shapes their identity and worldview.

Primary Socialization

In the socialization process at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate, the roles of administrators and teachers prove vitally important for facilitating this internalization. They bear primary responsibility for introducing new *santri* to the pesantren world and teaching fundamental values about polite and courteous behavior that will guide their interactions. One focus in initial learning involves cultivating the culture of “smile, greet, and salute” when meeting kyai, teachers, and pesantren administrators. Administrators and teachers serve as dedicated mentors and guides for new *santri*, helping them adapt to the pesantren environment and understand social norms prevailing within it.

One administrator articulated this priority clearly, stating that “every new *santri* entering this pesantren is first taught to become thoroughly accustomed to smiling, greeting, and shaking hands whenever meeting the kyai, teacher, or administrators at this pesantren. This becomes an initial measure of *santri*’s polite behavior. They board not merely to be educated to be smart but most importantly to possess noble character” (Informant 5, interview, 2024). Through this initial education, new *santri* are systematically guided to internalize polite and courteous behavioral values as integral parts of their identity and life practices at the pesantren. By consistently learning the culture of “smile, greet,

and salute,” new *santri* are expected to form attitudes that genuinely respect and honor others, creating harmonious and mutually respectful atmosphere in the pesantren environment.

Besides teaching polite and courteous behavior to *santri*, administrators and teachers recognize they must first become exemplary role models to *santri* by consistently implementing moral values in their own conduct. Exemplarity becomes an educational pattern readily accepted by every *santri* because it demonstrates lived commitment rather than mere verbal instruction. One teachers elaborated on this responsibility, explaining that “we, as teachers and administrators at the pesantren, realize that becoming role models for *santri* constitutes our primary responsibility. Our role as exemplars is the main key in shaping *santri*’s character and personality. As teachers, we strive to maintain good behavior thoroughly consistent with religious teachings we convey to *santri*” (Informant 8, interview, 2024).

Secondary Socialization

Forming shared understanding of religious moderation at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate does not occur spontaneously or automatically but through deliberate, sustained efforts. One crucial factor influencing this process involves the remarkably high values of brotherhood and solidarity among *santri*. Strong brotherhood culture exists prominently among *santri* in the Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate environment. These *santri* possess deep awareness of the critical importance of establishing harmonious and mutually supportive relationships in practicing religious teachings and upholding moderation values.

One teachers articulated this cultural foundation, stating that “the brotherhood system at this pesantren is quite strong. This refers to the proverb *torang basudara*, meaning we are siblings, protecting and loving each other. This is frequently advised by the kyai during studies and when providing guidance to *santri*” (Informant 8, interview, 2024). This local wisdom phrase encapsulates a worldview that transcends mere social nicety to represent deep commitment to mutual care and responsibility. Togetherness and brotherhood among *santri* at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate are remarkably strong, based on pesantren doctrine that has become culturally embedded across generations.

Santri’s social interactions with their environment consistently foster shared perspectives and beliefs that elevate every existing value and tradition to the status of essential practices that must be performed. Emotional attachment and high commitment to brotherhood and solidarity provide solid foundations for forming shared perspectives on religious moderation at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate. Understanding and practicing religious moderation become values firmly held by every individual in the pesantren community, with consciousness that brotherhood and solidarity are inseparable parts of efforts to achieve moderate religious understanding and practice.

Integration with Local Wisdom

The community and environment at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate possess culture deeply rooted in religion, reflected in various traditions still carefully preserved today. These traditions represent meaningful blends of religion and local wisdom characteristic of Ternate’s cultural heritage. This research emphasizes cultural or traditional aspects as implementations of religious moderation concepts. One meaning contained in religious moderation is the concept of harmony, which the community and pesantren environment regard as a precious asset that must be inherited across generations.

These traditions are profoundly influenced by religious values, with the community understanding that harmony and harmonious social interaction constitute religious values themselves. These values are possessed not only by the majority religion, Islam, but also by all religions existing in the surrounding areas. Religion is not merely identity but also integral part of personal and social life. The perspective of the community and environment at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate, which possesses strong life traditions from the Ternate Sultanate, demonstrates that community social life cannot be separated from religious factors. Religion plays an important role in building awareness about internalizing religious tolerance concepts, evident from various forms of worship houses as symbols of religious strength inseparable from society.

DISCUSSION

The Dialectical Process of Religious Moderation Construction

The findings of this study demonstrate that the construction of religious moderation education at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate follows a dialectical process thoroughly consistent with Peter L. Berger's social construction theory (P. L. Berger & Luckmann, 2011). This process involves three interconnected and continuous stages that work in dynamic relationship rather than as discrete sequential steps. The externalization stage reveals how the pesantren creates initial mechanisms for introducing religious moderation values through the kyai's exemplarity and institutional regulations.

The empirical evidence shows that *santri* consistently position the kyai as a central reference point whose words and actions become standards for the entire pesantren community. This exemplifies Berger and Luckmann's concept of externalization, where individuals express their subjective meanings into the social world through actions and interactions (P. L. Berger & Luckmann, 2011). The kyai's daily embodiment of moderate practices—balancing ritual obligations with social responsibilities, maintaining firm religious principles while demonstrating tolerance—represents the externalization of his internal understanding of religious moderation into observable behavioural patterns that become available for *santri* to experience and interpret.

This externalization process is crucial because, human beings cannot be understood as closed systems. Humans must continuously express themselves by building their world through activity (Ford & Ford, 2019). In the pesantren context, the kyai externalizes his understanding of religious moderation not through abstract verbal instruction alone but through the totality of his lived practice. This makes moderation visible, concrete, and accessible to *santri* who are still forming their own understandings.

The pesantren regulations complement the kyai's personal externalization by providing institutional structures that guide behavior patterns. These regulations represent what Berger and Luckmann call "institutional order" socially constructed patterns that acquire facticity and are experienced by individuals as external and coercive facts (Cvetković, 2016). However, the study reveals an important nuance: these regulations are not experienced purely as external impositions but gain legitimacy through their association with the kyai's exemplarity and the wider community's acceptance. This demonstrates that successful externalization in the pesantren context requires both personal modelling and institutional structuring working in tandem.

The dual mechanism of exemplarity and regulation addresses what Berger identifies as a fundamental characteristic of human existence: the need for social order to provide stability and predictability. The regulations create boundaries within which *santri* learn to navigate religious life, while the kyai's exemplarity

demonstrates how to inhabit these boundaries with authentic religious commitment rather than mere mechanical compliance. This combination ensures that externalized meanings are both structured and flexible, institutionalized yet personally meaningful.

Inter-generational Interaction and Value Institutionalization

At the objectivation stage, the study documents how religious moderation values initially externalized by the *kyai* and encoded in regulations become objective social facts through inter-generational interactions. Berger and Luckmann argue that objectivation is the process through which the externalized products of human activity attain the character of objectivity (Dreher, 2023). In the *pesantren* context, this occurs through three interconnected sub-processes: institutionalization of arguments and values, institutionalization of objectives and benefits, and habitualization.

The peer-learning system where new *santri* emulate senior *santri* demonstrates the objectivation process in action. When new *santri* first encounter *pesantren* practices, they experience them as external impositions requiring conscious effort and deliberate compliance. However, through repeated observation of and interaction with peers who have already internalized these practices, newcomers progressively experience them as natural, taken-for-granted aspects of reality. This transformation represents the essence of objectivation—the process through which human products acquire the character of objectivity, appearing to exist independently of the humans who produced them (Lassègue, 2020).

Berger and Luckmann emphasize that objectivation occurs through institutionalization—the process through which reciprocal typification of habitualized actions become established (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2023). In the *pesantren*, this institutionalization manifests when practices initially performed consciously and deliberately become standardized patterns that “everyone knows” and “everyone does.” The study reveals that this institutionalization is facilitated by the continuity of practices across generations of *santri*, creating what Berger calls “sedimentation”, the process through which experiences become deposited in memory and form the basis for collective knowledge.

The role of blessing (*barakah*) in the objectivation process is particularly significant from Berger’s theoretical perspective. Berger and Luckmann argue that institutions require legitimation-explanations and justifications that make the institutional order subjectively plausible (Ferrara, 2022). Legitimation provides cognitive and normative integration, explaining why things are as they are and why they should remain that way. The concept of *barakah* functions precisely as such a legitimating mechanism (Anwar & Suryani, 2022).

The belief that obedience to *pesantren* regulations brings *barakah* transforms what could be experienced as arbitrary rules into expressions of sacred order. This legitimation operates at what Berger and Luckmann call the “symbolic universe” level—the highest level of legitimation that integrates all institutional processes into a comprehensive frame of reference (Cvetković, 2016). *Barakah* connects mundane practices like washing clothes or maintaining cleanliness with ultimate meanings like divine blessing and future success, thereby providing powerful cosmic justification for institutional arrangements (Demirel & Sshib, 2015).

This legitimation through *barakah* illustrates what Berger later developed in “The Sacred Canopy”, the idea that religion functions to construct a sacred cosmos that provides ultimate legitimation for institutional order (P. L. Berger, 2015). The sacred cosmos transforms the socially constructed institutional order

into something that appears natural, inevitable, and divinely ordained (Keohane, 2016). In the pesantren context, barakah serves this cosmicizing function, making religious moderation appear not as a human construction but as alignment with divine will and cosmic order.

The habitualization process represents the final dimension of objectivation. Berger and Luckmann argue that habitualization provides the direction and specialization of activity that is lacking in human biological equipment (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2023). Through habitualization, actions that initially require conscious deliberation become automatic routines. The study documents how santri automatically prepare for prayers, independently undertake cleaning activities, and spontaneously gather for educational sessions without external instruction.

This habitualization is crucial for religious moderation construction because it ensures that moderate practices persist not through external enforcement but through internalized disposition (Rohmadi et al., 2024). When practices become habitual, they are no longer experienced as external obligations but as natural expressions of one's being. Berger and Luckmann note that habitualized actions retain their meaningful character but can be performed with minimal attention (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2023). This means *santri* can practice religious moderation "automatically" while their conscious attention focuses on other matters, making moderation a stable dispositional orientation rather than a deliberate choice requiring constant reinforcement.

Local Wisdom Integration Through the Internalization Process

At the internalization stage, Berger and Luckmann's framework helps explain how religious moderation values that have been externalized and objectified are reabsorbed by *santri* as subjective reality. Internalization is the process through which the objectivated social world is retrojected into consciousness in the course of socialization (Dreher, 2016). Through internalization, the individual becomes a member of society, and the objective social world becomes subjectively real for the individual (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2023).

The study reveals that internalization at the pesantren occurs through two phases: primary and secondary socialization. Primary socialization introduces fundamental behavioral patterns like the "smile, greet, and salute" culture, emphasizing noble character as the core educational goal. This aligns with Berger and Luckmann's description of primary socialization as the process through which the individual first encounters the social world and begins to internalize it as the only existing and conceivable world (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2016).

However, the pesantren context reveals an important elaboration of Berger's framework. Unlike the family-based primary socialization that Berger primarily analysed, pesantren socialization involves what might be termed "re-socialization" individuals who have already undergone primary socialization in their families enter the pesantren environment and undergo a new primary socialization process. This re-socialization is successful because, as Berger and Luckmann note, internalization requires emotional identification with significant others. In the pesantren, the kyai, administrators, and senior santri become new significant others whose definitions of reality carry special weight (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2016).

Secondary socialization in the pesantren builds deeper social identities through the integration of local Ternate wisdom, particularly the "*torang basudara*" brotherhood tradition. This integration demonstrates what Berger and Luckmann identify as a critical requirement for successful internalization:

biographical coherence. For new understandings to be deeply internalized, they must achieve integration with the individual's existing biographical experience and social context.

When religious moderation is taught using culturally familiar concepts like "*torang basudara*" it resonates with *santri*'s pre-existing cultural schemas. Berger and Luckmann emphasize that socialization is never complete and that the biography of the individual is apprehended as an episode within the subjective biography of others (P. L. Berger & Luckmann, 2011). The use of local wisdom ensures that religious moderation is not experienced as alien imposition requiring biographical rupture but rather as organic development of existing cultural identity (Lestari & Nopiana, 2024).

This biographical continuity is crucial because, as Berger and Luckmann argue, internalization requires that objective reality be transformed into subjective reality—that the world "out there" becomes the world "in here" (P. L. Berger & Luckmann, 2011). This transformation is facilitated when the objective reality is articulated through culturally familiar symbols and concepts. The "*torang basudara*" concept provides such familiarity, serving as what Berger might call a "plausibility structure"—a social context that makes particular beliefs and values seem natural and self-evident (Dreher, 2023).

Moreover, the continuous reinforcement of "*torang basudara*" through ongoing community relationships creates what Berger and Luckmann term "conversational apparatus"—the ongoing dialogue through which subjective reality is maintained (P. L. Berger & Luckmann, 2011). They argue that the most important vehicle of reality-maintenance is conversation, understood as the continuous talking with significant others. In the *pesantren*, the brotherhood tradition is not taught once but continuously enacted, discussed, and reinforced through daily interactions, providing ongoing reality-maintenance for internalized moderation values.

The integration of local wisdom also addresses what Berger and Luckmann identify as the "problem of subjective reality"—the question of how internalized reality remains stable over time (P. L. Berger & Luckmann, 2011). They argue that reality requires ongoing social support, and when such support is absent, reality begins to totter. The embedding of religious moderation within local cultural practices ensures continuous social support because these practices are not confined to the *pesantren* but extend into the wider community from which *santri* come and to which they will return.

The Construction of Plausibility Structures

Berger's framework helps explain why the *pesantren* functions as an effective agent for constructing religious moderation. In "The Sacred Canopy," Berger develops the concept of "plausibility structures"—social contexts that make particular religious or ideological beliefs seem natural and self-evident (P. L. Berger, 2015). The *pesantren* operates as a comprehensive plausibility structure for religious moderation through several mechanisms that align with Berger's theoretical insights.

First, the *pesantren* creates what Berger and Luckmann call a "total institution" of sorts—though voluntary rather than coercive—that encompasses all aspects of life (Clot-Garrell, 2022). This 24-hour immersion means that religious moderation is not confined to particular times or spaces but pervades the entire lived environment. Berger and Luckmann argue that the more comprehensive the reality-defining apparatus, the more firmly established is the reality it defines (Pfadenhauer et al., 2017). The *pesantren*'s comprehensive character ensures that religious moderation is continuously reinforced from

multiple directions simultaneously.

Second, the kyai's charismatic authority creates what Berger and Luckmann describe as "significant others" whose definitions of reality carry special weight (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2023). They argue that significant others have major responsibility for the success of internalization because they mediate the objective world to the individual and modify it in the course of mediating it (Kozulin, 2018). The kyai mediates religious moderation to santri not as abstract principle but as lived reality, making it subjectively real through his embodiment of it.

Third, the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions creates what Berger and Luckmann identify as the necessary comprehensiveness for successful socialization (Pfadenhauer et al., 2017). They argue that primary socialization must include both cognitive and emotional elements—the child must not only intellectually understand definitions of reality but also emotionally identify with significant others. The pesantren's holistic approach ensures that religious moderation is not merely understood cognitively but emotionally embraced and behaviourally enacted.

Fourth, the utilization of local wisdom addresses what Berger and Luckmann recognize as the importance of "symbolic universes"—bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate different provinces of meaning (P. Berger & Luckmann, 2016). The integration of Islamic teachings with Ternate cultural traditions creates a symbolic universe wherein religious moderation appears not as foreign imposition but as natural expression of both universal Islamic principles and particular cultural identity.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that religious moderation education at Pesantren Darul Falah Ternate is constructed through three interconnected dialectical stages consistent with Peter L. Berger's social construction theory: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. At the externalization stage, the kyai's charismatic exemplarity and comprehensive pesantren regulations serve as primary mechanisms that make religious moderation visible and structured. At the objectivation stage, inter-generational interactions institutionalize moderation values through peer learning, legitimation via the concept of barakah, and habitualization processes that transform conscious practices into automatic dispositions. At the internalization stage, primary and secondary socialization integrate universal Islamic teachings with Ternate local wisdom, particularly the "*torang basudara*" brotherhood tradition, creating contextual religious moderation that resonates with students' cultural identities.

The successful integration of institutional structures, charismatic authority, peer relationships, and cultural resources creates an effective construction model demonstrating that religious moderation is not a fixed state but a continuous social construction requiring ongoing dialectical processes. The findings reveal that pesantren function as comprehensive plausibility structures where moderation is constructed through holistic socialization engaging cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions simultaneously.

Theoretically, this research demonstrates Berger's framework applicability to Islamic educational contexts while revealing important nuances: the centrality of charismatic authority and integration of religious concepts like barakah require elaboration beyond Berger's original framework. Empirically, it explains how pesantren translate abstract theological concepts into lived practices through specific mechanisms and conditions.

For pesantren practitioners, maintaining consistency between teachings and practices, ensuring kyai exemplarity, cultivating inter-generational mentorship, and utilizing local wisdom remain crucial. For policymakers, recognizing local wisdom diversity and adopting facilitative rather than prescriptive approaches can enhance effectiveness. Future research should pursue longitudinal studies examining long-term sustainability, comparative studies across diverse pesantren contexts, and investigation of digital media influences on construction processes.

This research contributes empirical evidence showing that effective religious moderation requires creating social environments enabling individuals to experience, practice, and internalize moderation in contextually meaningful ways—a continuous construction embedded in institutional practices, relational networks, and cultural traditions that must be repeatedly enacted as contexts evolve and new challenges emerge.

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