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BUILDING MODERATE AND NATIONALLY MINDED: HOW ISLAMIC MODERATION AND NATIONAL EDUCATION ARE CULTIVATED IN A TAREKAT-BASED PESANTREN

Adi Wibowo [1]; Khoirun Nisa [1]*
[1] Institut Agama Islam An-Nawawi Purworejo, Central Java, Indonesia
** Correspondence Author: adiwibowo@iaiannawawi.ac.id*

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Abstract : *This study examines the concepts of Islamic moderation and national education in the educational thought and practice. This research is based on concerns about religious radicalism and the weakening of national commitment among the younger generation in Indonesia, which demands an educational model that integrates religious values with civic responsibility. Using a qualitative case study design, this study analyzes data collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and lecture materials, which are then reduced, triangulated, and critically interpreted in relation to relevant theoretical frameworks. The findings indicate that Islamic moderation is implemented through nationalist da'wah, political ijtihad based on national commitment, and character education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This confirms that Islamic boarding schools are effective in cultivating moderate Islamic values while strengthening national consciousness. This study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on Islamic moderation by demonstrating that traditional Islamic boarding schools and local ulama can play a crucial role in fostering inclusive religiosity, social cohesion, and resistance to radical ideologies in contemporary Indonesia.*

Keywords : *Islamic Moderation, National Education; Tarekat; Pesantren.*

Abstrak : *Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep moderasi Islam dan pendidikan nasional dalam pemikiran dan praktik pendidikan. Penelitian ini berlandaskan keprihatinan atas radikalisme agama dan melemahnya komitmen nasional di kalangan generasi muda di Indonesia, yang menuntut model pendidikan yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai agama dengan tanggung jawab kewarganegaraan. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis data yang dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dokumentasi, dan materi ceramah, yang kemudian direduksi, ditriangulasi, dan diinterpretasikan secara kritis dalam kaitannya dengan kerangka teori yang relevan. Temuan menunjukkan moderasi Islam diterapkan melalui dakwah nasionalis, ijtihad politik berbasis komitmen kebangsaan, dan pendidikan karakter di pesantren. Hal ini menegaskan bahwa pesantren efektif dalam menumbuhkan nilai Islam moderat sekaligus memperkuat kesadaran nasional. Studi ini berkontribusi pada kajian yang berkembang tentang moderasi Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa pesantren tradisional dan ulama lokal dapat memainkan peran penting dalam mendorong religiusitas inklusif, kohesi sosial, dan perlawanan terhadap ideologi radikal di Indonesia kontemporer.*

Kata Kunci : *Moderasi Islam; Pendidikan Kebangsaan; Tarekat; Pesantren.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic moderation and national education are two increasingly central themes in contemporary Islamic discourse in Indonesia, especially amidst the strengthening of religious radicalism and the weakening of national orientation in some groups in society (Khasanah et al., 2023; Lindsey et al., 2023; Riyawi & Febriansyah, 2023). This issue is important to study because radicalism is not only related to differences in religious views, but also related to threats to social cohesion, tolerance among citizens, and the resilience of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia NKRI (Nasution & Prandana, 2025). In this context, the study of Islamic moderation becomes interesting because Islam basically teaches peace, compassion, and the principle of rahmatan lil 'alamin, but in contemporary social practices it is often confronted with religious expressions that are exclusive, literal, and in certain conditions legitimize violence in the name of religion.

The concept of radicalism refers to a style of thought and movement characterized by doctrinal rigidity, a rejection of diversity, a closed religious attitude, and the justification of the use of coercive means to achieve certain ideological goals (Zamir & Kaunert, 2025). In the Indonesian context, this tendency often overlaps with the agenda of formally enforcing Islamic law, the idea of establishing an Islamic state, and demands for the establishment of a caliphate system (Sauri et al., 2022). This situation becomes increasingly important to address when radicalism enters the educational realm, as educational institutions are not only spaces for the transfer of knowledge but also serve as institutions for the formation of identity, religious habitus, and national orientation of the younger generation.

Various studies have shown that the infiltration of radical ideology into educational institutions occurs through many sources, such as the learning process, textbooks, digital media, friendship networks, alumni, extracurricular activities, and student spiritual organizations such as ROHIS (Mohammadiha et al., 2021; Yudha Pratama et al., 2024). This suggests that radicalization in educational environments often operates subtly, systematically, and sustainably, not solely through overt propaganda. Therefore, strengthening Islamic moderation in education cannot be achieved solely through normative discourse but must be realized through educational practices that instill inclusive, tolerant, proportional, and well-being-oriented attitudes. Within this framework, national education becomes an integral part of efforts to strengthen Islamic moderation.

Several previous studies have examined efforts to prevent radicalism through various approaches. Aminudin, Nugroho, & Sutrisno, (2023), highlighted social media as a crucial channel for the spread of radical ideology, while Anin et al., (2025) demonstrated that access to digital information accelerates exposure to radical ideology. Smith & Mansuro, (2026) positioned moderation-oriented Islamic education as a strategic preventive tool. Rozi et al., (2025) emphasize the multicultural and inclusive nature of Islamic teachings, Pramadia, Muhadzib, Putra, Aryadi, & Seprapdi, (2025) highlight the importance of youth

leadership in countering radicalism, and Navarro-Granados, Cruz-González, Abderrahaman Mohamed, & Llorent-Bedmar, (2025) emphasize the need for teacher training and strengthening institutional capacity to anticipate intolerance and violence. In general, these studies show that religious moderation and inclusive education are important foundations in preventing the development of radicalism.

Previous studies have generally focused on formal schools, digital media-based radicalization, multicultural education, or religious moderation within a general framework. This research gap lies in the limited number of studies specifically examining how Islamic moderation and national education are constructed, internalized, and practiced in tarekat-based Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) through the scholarly and spiritual authority of a kiai (Islamic scholar), who also serves as the pesantren's guardian and tarekat leader. In other words, the relationship between Islamic moderation, national education, the traditional Islamic boarding school tradition, and character formation through tarekat spiritual disciplines remains largely unexplored in academic studies.

Based on this gap, this study positions the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School as a crucial locus for study. This Islamic boarding school is unique because it combines salaf education, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah orientation, and spiritual guidance through the Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah (TQN) Order within the framework of forming religious, moderate students with a national commitment. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to analyze Islamic moderation and national education not only as normative concepts, but as living educational practices, shaped by the thoughts of KH. Achmad Chalwani and institutionalized in the culture, traditions, and daily activities of the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School. Thus, this research offers a more specific perspective on how tarekat-based Islamic boarding schools can become models for strengthening Islamic moderation that aligns with national values.

The uniqueness of the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School is evident in its ability to combine religious piety, spiritual discipline, and national loyalty within the educational life of the boarding school. This is reflected in the students' involvement in da'wah (Islamic outreach) activities in pluralistic areas like Gunung Kidul, which require the ability to build tolerance and coexist with adherents of other faiths. Furthermore, national education is also realized through institutional practices, such as the consistent holding of the August 17th ceremony as part of the boarding school's educational tradition. All of these practices demonstrate that the values of moderation and nationalism at the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School are not merely complementary, but inherent parts of the educational vision being developed.

In this context, the role of KH. Achmad Chalwani is crucial. As the boarding school's caretaker and the leader of the National Religious Education (TQN), he wields strong authority in shaping the intellectual, spiritual, and social orientation of the students. His

thinking serves as a normative basis for instilling the values of balance, tolerance, love of the homeland, and commitment to the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the concept of Islamic moderation in the thinking of KH. Achmad Chalwani and explains its implementation in the practice of national education at the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School. Through this focus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of studies on Islamic moderation, national education, and the role of tarekat-based Islamic boarding schools in strengthening peaceful, inclusive, and nationally-minded Islam in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to understand the meaning of the experiences of Islamic boarding school actors in experiencing, transmitting, and practicing Islamic moderation and national education at the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School. The phenomenological approach was chosen because this study focuses on the lived experiences of informants regarding the thoughts of KH. Achmad Chalwani and their manifestations in daily educational practices. Operationally, the phenomenological analysis was conducted through the stages of bracketing or epoché, horizontalization, and extraction of the essence of experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; de Beer et al., 2023). In the bracketing stage, the researcher suspends personal assumptions, theoretical preferences, and normative judgments so that the data is read from the perspective of the participants. Furthermore, the researcher limits the horizon of the experiences analyzed only to the experiences of informants directly related to Islamic moderation, national education, and the influence of KH. Achmad Chalwani's thoughts on the life of Islamic boarding school education. In the horizontalization stage, all relevant statements from interviews and observations were treated equally in the initial analysis phase, then reduced to meaningful units to identify the main themes and essence of the informants' collective experiences (Giorgi, 2009).

Research subjects were selected purposively based on the following criteria: direct involvement in the Islamic boarding school education system, understanding of the teachings or example of KH. Achmad Chalwani, and willingness to provide in-depth information. Based on these criteria, informants included the caretakers or successors of the Islamic boarding school authority, senior ustaz or ustazah (Islamic teacher), administrators, senior students (*santri*), alumni, and local community leaders who interacted with the Islamic boarding school. The number of informants was not determined statistically but was based on the principle of sufficient information until data saturation was achieved (Micah et al., 2023). Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were guided by open-ended questions regarding the informants' understanding of Islamic moderation, national education, and the implementation of KH. Achmad Chalwani's thoughts in Islamic

boarding school life. All interviews were recorded with the informants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Observations were conducted during religious study activities, student development, tarekat rituals, socio-religious activities, and national activities within the Islamic boarding school environment. Documentation included institutional archives, religious study manuscripts, photographs of activities, and other relevant documents. A combination of these three techniques was used to strengthen the depth of the data and enable triangulation between sources and methods.

Data analysis was conducted in stages, starting with organizing transcripts, field notes, and documents, followed by identifying significant statements, grouping meaning units, developing themes, and compiling textural and structural descriptions until a synthesis of the essence of the informants' experiences was achieved. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and audit trail development throughout the research process (Rialti & Filieri, 2024). This study also adhered to ethical research principles. All participants received an explanation of the research objectives, the nature of their involvement, the use of data, and the right to refuse or discontinue participation at any time. Consent was obtained through informed consent, informants' identities were disguised with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality, and all data was stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. Furthermore, the researcher practiced reflexivity by explaining her position in the field and maintaining sensitivity to norms, authority relations, and Islamic boarding school culture to ensure the ethical and credible data collection and interpretation process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that the concept of Islamic moderation and national education in educational thought and practice is as follows;

1. The Concept of Islamic Moderation in the Thought of KH. Achmad Chalwani

The research results show that the concept of Islamic moderation in the thought of KH. Achmad Chalwani is not merely interpreted as a theological position between two extremes, but has developed into a conceptual framework that is educational, integrative, and contextual. This concept is aimed at simultaneously addressing social, national, and religious needs, thereby shaping a pattern of religiosity that aligns with the reality of pluralistic Indonesian society. At the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School, Islamic moderation is built through four main indicators: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture. These four indicators are integrated into a single set of values that shape the character of students who are religious, inclusive, peaceful, and possess a strong sense of national consciousness.

Table 1: Conceptual Data on Islamic Moderation in the Thoughts of KH. Achmad Chalwani

Interview / Observation Data	Description	Code
Islamic Boarding School Supervisor: "Love for the homeland is part of faith, so maintaining the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and respecting Pancasila is an obligation."	The relationship between religiosity and nationalism as a single value unit	National Commitment
Ustadz: "Students are taught to respect differences, both in terms of sect and culture."	Instilling the value of tolerance as a principle of religiosity	Tolerance
Observations show that conflict resolution is carried out through non-violent deliberation.	Internalization of anti-violence values in social life	Anti-Violence
Islamic Boarding School Administrator: "Local culture will continue to be maintained as long as it does not conflict with Islamic law."	Openness to local culture in religious practices	Local Culture
The study material links Islamic teachings with global issues	Ability to adapt to the challenges of modernity	Adaptive

Table 1 shows that the concept of Islamic moderation is not merely normative, but is constructed through experience, practice, and reflection in Islamic boarding school life. This data points to several key dimensions in the thinking of KH. Achmad Chalwani;

First, the integration of religion and nationalism. The data show that national values such as love of the homeland, respect for Pancasila, and commitment to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) are positioned as part of religiosity. This confirms that in KH. Achmad Chalwani's thinking, there is no dichotomy between religion and state; rather, both are mutually reinforcing elements in realizing a just and harmonious life. *Second*, moderation as a tolerant attitude. The concept of Islamic moderation emphasizes the importance of respecting differences, both theologically and socio-culturally. Tolerance is not merely understood as discourse but is internalized in the daily social interactions of students, thus forming inclusive relationship patterns. *Third*, moderation as a culture of peace. Research findings indicate that the value of non-violence is an important part of the character development of students. Conflict resolution through deliberation reflects an orientation toward peace as a concrete practice of moderate Islamic teachings. *Fourth*, moderation as an accommodating attitude toward local culture. KH. Achmad Chalwani's thinking demonstrates openness to local traditions as part of religious expression, as long as they do not conflict with sharia principles. This demonstrates that Islam is understood contextually and is capable of

dialogue with the culture of the community. *Fifth*, moderation as an adaptive framework. This concept also has a responsive dimension to changing times. Islamic boarding schools not only maintain tradition but also link Islamic teachings to contemporary issues, thus remaining relevant in facing the challenges of modernity.

Thus, these findings indicate that the concept of Islamic moderation in KH. Achmad Chalwani's thinking is an integrative and adaptive construct, functioning not only as a theological framework but also as a foundation for character education. This concept is oriented toward the internalization of values, thus fostering a generation that is spiritually religious, socially inclusive, and possesses a strong national commitment in community life.

2. Implementation of Islamic Moderation in the Practice of National Education at the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School in Purworejo

Demonstrates that the implementation of Islamic moderation in the practice of national education is carried out concretely through the curriculum, habituation, institutional activities, da'wah (Islamic outreach), and social interactions between students. National education is not taught as additional material separate from religious education, but rather integrated into the life of the boarding school. This is evident through flag ceremonies, Scouting, Bahsul Masail (Islamic study groups), religious studies, moral studies, and the practice of discipline and mutual cooperation, all of which serve as a means of fostering patriotism, responsibility, leadership, respect for differences, and love for the nation. This implementation demonstrates that national education at An-Nawawi is not merely symbolic, but occurs through direct experiences that shape the students' habits.

The implementation of moderation is also strongly evident in KH. Achmad Chalwani's da'wah strategy. Preaching of love for the homeland is carried out using inclusive and cultural methods, for example by including the songs "*Ya Lal Wathan*" and "*Indonesia Raya*", introducing national historical figures, and calling for the importance of maintaining national unity. This strategy shows that preaching is not used solely to strengthen individual religiosity, but also to instill a collective national identity. From the research results, it can be understood that preaching in Islamic boarding schools functions as a medium for political-national education that shapes the understanding of students and the community that love for the homeland is part of the experience of Islam. Furthermore, the political ijtihad of KH. Achmad Chalwani also shows that socio-political involvement is seen as part of a Muslim's moral responsibility, as long as it is directed towards social justice, the welfare of the people, and the national interest.

In terms of tolerance, the implementation of Islamic moderation is evident through the teaching of moral texts, discussions among students, openness to non-Muslim teachers in specific training programs, and social activities in diverse areas, including da'wah (Islamic outreach) in non-Muslim areas. These findings indicate that tolerance at An-Nawawi is not merely a discourse but is practiced as a social skill for interacting wisely with those of different religions, cultures, and social backgrounds. This educational pattern shapes students who are not exclusive, but who are prepared to exist in a pluralistic society without losing their religious identity. In other words, Islamic moderation at this Islamic boarding school produces a religious attitude that is firm in principle yet open in social relations.

In terms of anti-violence, research results show that the Islamic boarding school places violence prevention as a pillar of education. The values of peace, respect for others, dialogical conflict resolution, and adherence to the Islamic boarding school's rules are emphasized through learning, ethical development, leadership training, and the existence of the Islamic boarding school's Qanun (Islamic Law). This approach demonstrates that the Islamic boarding school strives to build a safe and comfortable environment so that students grow as individuals who are not easily exposed to radicalism or aggressive behavior. This implementation also demonstrates that Islamic moderation at An-Nawawi serves a preventative role against violence, as education is oriented not only toward mastery of religious knowledge but also toward developing self-control, social ethics, and collective responsibility.

The accommodating aspect of local culture also serves as important evidence of the implementation of Islamic moderation at this Islamic boarding school. The principle of "*al-muhafazhah 'ala al-qadim al-shalih wa al-akhdz bi al-jadid al-ashlah*" demonstrates that An-Nawawi strives to maintain good old traditions while embracing better innovations. This attitude demonstrates that local culture is not positioned as a threat to religion, but rather as a social medium that can coexist with Islamic values as long as it does not conflict with fundamental religious principles. Therefore, the implementation of moderation at An-Nawawi is contextual, as it harmoniously bridges Islamic teachings, Islamic boarding school traditions, and the needs of the surrounding community.

The implementation of Islamic moderation in national education is also strengthened through collaboration with the government, particularly through the Adiwiyata program, discipline development, and student leadership development. Collaboration with the Environmental Service Agency (DLHP) and the Military District Command (Kodim) demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools are not isolated but are actively building relationships with state institutions in an effort to develop students who are environmentally conscious, disciplined, responsible, and prepared to become good

citizens. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that national education in Islamic boarding schools is not solely based on a narrative of love for the homeland but is also manifested in concrete concern for public life and social welfare.

Table 1: Activities Reflecting the Implementation of Islamic Moderation and National Education

No	Activity Name	Activity Conducted
1.	Flag Ceremony	Regular flag ceremony activities aimed at instilling nationalism, respect for state symbols, and commitment to the homeland among *santri*.
2.	*Pramuka* (Scouting)	Scouting activities designed to build discipline, teamwork, leadership, and patriotic character as part of national character education in the pesantren.
3.	Bahsul Masail Discussion Forum	Discussion sessions on diversity and social issues that train *santri* to understand differences of opinion, develop tolerance, and strengthen ukhuwah wathaniyah in a plural society.
4.	*Gerakan Dakwah Cinta Tanah Air*	Preaching activities initiated by KH. Achmad Chalwani that integrate Islamic values with nationalism through messages on unity, moral responsibility, and love for the homeland.
5.	National Songs in Dakwah	Religious gatherings and dakwah events where songs such as *Ya Lal Wathan*, *Indonesia Raya*, and *Hubbul Wathan* are used to strengthen patriotism and national awareness among *santri* and the wider community.
6.	*Taisir al-Khalaq* Learning	Study of *Taisir al-Khalaq fi 'Ilmi Al-Akhlaq* to introduce moral values, tolerance, and inclusive attitudes in daily interactions among *santri*.
7.	Dakwah in Non-Muslim Areas	Social-religious activities in diverse communities to train santri to interact wisely with people of different religious and cultural backgrounds and to practice tolerance directly.
8.	Skills Training with Non-Muslim Tutors	Skills training involving non-Muslim instructors as part of multicultural learning and the development of inclusive attitudes in the pesantren environment.
9.	*Adiwiyata* Program	Environmental education activities carried out in collaboration with DLHP and other institutions to foster environmental awareness, social responsibility, and nationalist character among *santri*.
10.	Leadership and Anti-Violence Development	Guidance programs, ethics discussions, and anti-violence education intended to create a peaceful learning environment and build *santri* character based on respect, empathy, and cooperation.

The results show the eight pillars demonstrate that the implementation of Islamic moderation and national education at the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School is built in an integrated manner through national education that instills love for the

homeland, respect for state symbols, and an understanding of national unity; character education that shapes noble morals, responsibility, tolerance, and social awareness; collaboration with the government through programs such as Adiwiyata to strengthen discipline, environmental awareness, and civic awareness; a patriotic da'wah movement that integrates Islamic values with nationalism through lectures, national anthems, and narratives of unity; national-based political ijtihad that fosters constructive political awareness for the benefit of the people and the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia; tolerance that is cultivated through the study of scriptures, discussions, and inclusive social interactions; anti-violence that is realized through discipline, ethical development, and peaceful conflict resolution; and an accommodating attitude towards local culture that accepts local traditions as long as they do not conflict with Islamic principles, so that all these pillars together form students who are religious, nationalistic, moderate, peaceful, and able to live harmoniously in a pluralistic society.

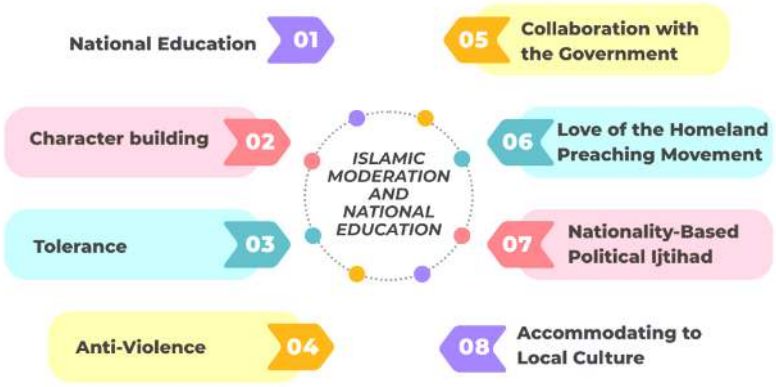


Figure 1: Eight Pillars of Islamic Moderation And National Education

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic moderation in the thinking of KH. Achmad Chalwani does not stop at a normative understanding of the middle ground, but is formulated as an educational framework that integrates religious and national values. The research data confirms that this concept is built on four main indicators: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and respect for local culture. It is then formulated through two main principles: *at-takāmul* (integration) and *at-takayyufi* (adaptiveness). This finding aligns with the concept of wasathiyah, understood as a balance between two extremes, as explained by Qardhawi and reinforced by Dimyati, who argues that moderation encompasses balance in beliefs, attitudes, behavior, transactions, and morality (Dimyati, 2021; Haruna et al., 2024; Najmudin & Said, 2020). Thus, KH. Achmad Chalwani's thinking can be interpreted as an operationalization of wasathiyah in the context of Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia. When linked to Talcott Parsons' theory, these findings demonstrate that the concepts of *at-takāmul* and *at-takayyufi* function as social mechanisms to maintain the balance of Islamic boarding schools amidst social change. The

concept of religious moderation at An-Nawawi, within the AGIL framework (adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency), demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools adapt to environmental changes, set goals for the formation of moderate students, integrate shared values, and sustainably maintain core values.

This analysis is significant because it demonstrates that Islamic moderation at An-Nawawi is not a sporadic response to the issue of radicalism, but rather a structured educational design. Compared to previous research that often positions religious moderation as a curricular value or policy discourse, this study demonstrates how moderation is actually alive in Islamic boarding school culture and practiced throughout the entire social system. At the implementation level, research results show that national education at the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School is carried out through symbolic habits and social practices, such as flag ceremonies, Scouting, Bahsul Masail, religious studies, sorogan, and social cooperation with government institutions. This finding is very relevant to Thomas Lickona's character education theory, which emphasizes that character is not formed only through cognitive teaching, but also through role models, habits, social interactions, and continuous appreciation of values (Lickona, 1996). In this context, students not only understand the importance of nationalism, tolerance, and social responsibility, but also practice them in their daily activities. Therefore, national education at An-Nawawi is more appropriately understood as a process of internalizing national habitus rather than simply the transfer of civic knowledge.

The findings on KH. Achmad Chalwani's patriotic preaching movement and political ijtihad reinforce the argument that the relationship between religion and state in this Islamic boarding school is symbiotic. The text shows that nationalistic preaching is carried out through inclusive teaching, the use of national anthems such as Ya Lal Wathan and Indonesia Raya, the introduction of national figures, and the affirmation that patriotism is part of a Muslim's faith and social responsibility (Falah & Wibowo, 2023; Tiwuk et al., 2025; Annisa, 2025). These findings align with studies by Wahid et al., (2020), which demonstrate that the Nusantara Islamic tradition, particularly within the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), is able to accommodate the modern nation-state without losing its Islamic identity. The difference is that this study places a more concrete emphasis on the role of the local figure, KH. Achmad Chalwani, as an ideological and pedagogical agent, so that religious nationalism is not merely an institutional idea but is present as a daily practice of preaching and leadership. Regarding tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodating local culture, the research findings show that Islamic moderation at An-Nawawi has an inclusive and contextual approach (Nazilah et al., 2024). Preaching activities in non-Muslim areas, openness to non-Muslim tutors for skills training, study of moral texts, and strengthening a culture of dialogue are all means of fostering a tolerant attitude (Hasanah & Sain, 2025; Mundiri et al., 2025). Meanwhile, anti-violence policies, leadership training, social ethics, and strengthening dialogue as a means of conflict resolution demonstrate that this Islamic

boarding school is developing a model of peace education that is preventative against radicalism. These findings support Hanafi & Murtadho, (2025) who assert that Islamic moderation and national insight can be effectively instilled in Islamic boarding schools, and align with Zulkifli et al., (2023) who emphasized the importance of peace education based on Islamic values. However, this study goes beyond previous research because it shows that tolerance and anti-violence are not only taught as values, but are embedded in the institutional structure and culture of Islamic boarding schools.

The theoretical implication of these findings is that tarekat-based Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can be positioned as an important model in the development of Islamic moderation studies in Indonesia. To date, some studies have tended to position traditional tarekat and pesantren as conservative institutions. However, this study's findings suggest otherwise: traditionality is not synonymous with exclusivism. In fact, through the authority of the kiai (Islamic cleric), the Aswaja culture, collective habituation, and openness to social realities, An-Nawawi demonstrates that tradition can be the foundation for substantive moderation (Méndez-Suárez et al., 2026; Qushwa & Baharun, 2024). The contribution of this research, therefore, lies in strengthening empirical evidence that Islamic moderation is not merely a state project or elite discourse, but rather lives at the grassroots level and can be effectively practiced through the pesantren education system (Rahmat & Osere, 2025). Practically, these findings are relevant for developing religious education policies, strengthening character education, and community-based deradicalization strategies.

Several factors appear to support these findings. *First*, KH. Achmad Chalwani's scholarly authority and charisma as a kiai, pesantren leader, and tarekat leader provide strong legitimacy for the internalization of moderation values. *Second*, the ideological affiliation of Islamic boarding schools with Nahdlatul Ulama provides a theological and social foundation for the acceptance of Pancasila, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and local culture. *Third*, the relatively stable and rich social environment of Islamic boarding schools supports the repeated and consistent internalization of character values. However, there are also factors that potentially contradict initial expectations, namely the penetration of exclusive religious ideologies through digital media, certain student organizations, and transnational ideological currents that can become gateways for radicalism (Awaliah S et al., 2025; Syaâ & Chumaidah, 2020).This means that the success of moderation in Islamic boarding schools cannot be considered definitive, as they are always in contestation with rapidly changing external influences.

This study also has several limitations that need to be critically addressed. First, this study focuses on one figure and one Islamic boarding school institution, so generalizing the findings to all Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia must be done with caution. Second, the empirical basis of the study relies primarily on qualitative observations, lecture documentation, and institutional descriptions, thus not fully capturing the dynamics of perceptions of students, alumni, or the surrounding community longitudinally. Third, some connections between theory and practice remain stronger at the interpretive level than

through comparative verification across locations. Therefore, future research should employ a mixed methods approach, expanding the study locations to various traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) of the *Salaf, Khalaf*, and Sufi orders *(tarekat),* and incorporating new variables such as the influence of digital media, religious organization networks, and alumni experiences after leaving the pesantren. With this expansion, the study of Islamic moderation will yield a more comprehensive picture, not only of the values taught but also of the resilience of those values in the face of contemporary social change.

This concept confirms that Islamic moderation in the thought of KH. Achmad Chalwani has significantly contributed to the practice of national education at the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School. The concepts of *at-takāmul* and *at-takayyufi* enable the pesantren to integrate Islam, nationalism, tolerance, non-violence, and local culture into a vibrant educational system. These findings not only enrich the study of Islamic moderation and national education, but also broaden the understanding of the role of Islamic boarding schools based on tarekat as agents of forming a peaceful, inclusive, and relevant Islam to the needs of the Indonesian nation amidst the challenges of radicalism and globalization of values.

CONCLUSION

Islamic moderation in the thought of KH. Achmad Chalwani is not understood merely as a normatively moderate religious attitude, but rather as an integrative and adaptive educational framework through the concepts of *at-takāmul* and *at-takayyufi,* which combine national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and respect for local culture in the Islamic boarding school education system. The main findings show that this concept is implemented concretely at the An-Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School through national education, character education, cooperation with the government, a patriotic da'wah movement, the habituation of respect for state symbols, and national-based political ijtihad, resulting in the formation of students who are religious, nationalist, tolerant, and have a strong social responsibility. These results provide a deeper understanding that Islamic boarding schools based on tarekat are not identical to narrow conservatism, but can instead be an effective space for the internalization of peaceful, inclusive, and national-minded Islam, while strengthening the findings of previous research on the role of Islamic boarding schools in religious moderation and character education. Socially and culturally, this study emphasizes the importance of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) as agents of social cohesion, preventers of radicalism, and mediators between Islamic teachings and the realities of Indonesian nationality. Academically, this study contributes by demonstrating that theories of social integration and character education can be interpreted more contextually through the practice of Islamic boarding school education. However, this study has limitations because it focuses on a single figure and a single Islamic boarding school, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research should expand

the study location, involve the perspectives of students (*santri*), alumni, and the community more deeply, and employ method triangulation to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the sustainability of Islamic moderation in facing contemporary social challenges.

This study recommends that Islamic boarding school administrators and Islamic education practitioners integrate the values of Islamic moderation and national education more systematically into the curriculum, institutional culture, rules of conduct, and daily activities of students, particularly through interactive learning, socio-cultural activities, strengthening dialogue, and collaboration with external institutions. For academics, this research can serve as a basis for developing further studies on Islamic moderation based on Islamic boarding schools with a broader scope, including comparisons between Islamic boarding schools, exploring the role of digital media, and using data triangulation to strengthen the validity of the findings. For stakeholders in the fields of education and religion, the results of this study can be used to support policies to strengthen character education, community-based deradicalization, and the development of Islamic boarding school education models that are friendly to social and cultural diversity. Future research is also recommended to further examine the long-term effectiveness of the concepts of *at-takāmul* and *at-takayyufi* in shaping students who are able to maintain the values of moderation when faced with social, political, and ideological changes outside the Islamic boarding school environment.

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