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Curriculum as a Value-Transmission System: Internalizing Religious Moderation through the Curriculum of Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Based on the Salaf Educational Tradition

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Abstrak

Penelitian mengenai moderasi beragama di pesantren umumnya menempatkan moderasi sebagai hasil pembelajaran atau program pendidikan, sementara kurikulum sebagai sistem transmisi nilai yang mengintegrasikan dimensi filosofis, pedagogis, kultural, dan kepemimpinan masih relatif jarang dikaji. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana kurikulum Pesantren Al-Ikhlash yang berlandaskan tradisi pendidikan *salaf* menginternalisasikan moderasi beragama melalui keterpaduan antara filosofi kurikulum, struktur kurikulum, pembelajaran *kitab kuning*, pedagogi *sorogan* dan *bandongan*, kepemimpinan kiai, *hidden curriculum*, serta budaya pesantren. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus intrinsik. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan *Reflexive Thematic Analysis*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa moderasi beragama tidak diajarkan sebagai mata pelajaran tersendiri, melainkan terintegrasi secara sistematis dalam keseluruhan sistem kurikulum. Pembelajaran *kitab kuning* menjadi fondasi epistemologis yang membentuk pemahaman keagamaan yang seimbang melalui pengenalan terhadap keragaman pandangan ulama (*ikhtilāf*). Metode *sorogan* dan *bandongan* berfungsi sebagai mekanisme pedagogis untuk mentransmisikan adab, kerendahan hati intelektual, dan penghargaan terhadap perbedaan, sedangkan kepemimpinan kiai, *hidden curriculum*, dan budaya kelembagaan memperkuat proses internalisasi nilai melalui keteladanan dan pembiasaan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari santri. Penelitian ini menghasilkan model konseptual yang memosisikan kurikulum



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sebagai **value-transmission system**, sehingga memperluas perspektif teori kurikulum Islam dengan menegaskan bahwa moderasi beragama merupakan karakteristik struktural dari keseluruhan ekosistem pendidikan pesantren, bukan sekadar luaran pembelajaran. Model¹⁷sebut memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan teori kurikulum berbasis nilai dalam pendidikan Islam serta menjadi rujukan bagi pengembangan kurikulum moderasi beragama di lembaga pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Kitab Kuning, Kurikulum, Moderasi Beragama, Pesantren, Value-Transmission System*

Abstract

Research on religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) has largely conceptualized religious moderation as either an educational outcome or a curricular program, while limited attention has been given to curriculum as an integrated value-transmission system²⁴compassing philosophical, pedagogical, cultural, and leadership dimensions. This study aims to examine how the curriculum of Pesantren Al-Ikhlash, grounded in the salaf educational tradition, internalizes religious moderation through the integration of curriculum philosophy, curriculum structure, the study of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts),³⁸ *sorogan* and *bandongan* pedagogies, *kiai* leadership, the hidden curriculum, and institutional culture.⁴ The study employed an intrinsic qualitative case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis³³ and were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The findings reveal that religious moderation is not taught as a stand-alone subject but is systematically embedded throughout the curriculum as an integral education process. The study of *kitab kuning* provides the epistemological foundation for balanced religious understanding by exposing students to the diversity of classical Islamic scholarship and legitimate scholarly disagreement (*ikhtilāf*). Meanwhile, *sorogan* and *bandongan* function as pedagogical mechanisms for transmitting ethical conduct, intellectual humility, and respect for diversity, while *kiai* leadership, the hidden curriculum, and institutional culture reinforce value internalization through exemplary leadership and daily pedagogical practices. The study proposes a conceptual model that positions curriculum as an integrated means of transmitting ethical values, thereby extending Islamic curriculum theory by demonstrating that religious moderation constitutes a structural characteristic of the pesantren educational ecosystem rather than merely an instructional outcome. This model contributes to the advancement of value-based curriculum theory in Islamic education and offers a comprehensive framework for developing religious moderation curricula in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: *Curriculum, Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, Religious Moderation, Value-Transmission System*

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is increasingly recognized as more than a formal framework that organizes learning objectives, instructional content, learning activities, and assessment. Contemporary curriculum scholarship conceptualizes curriculum as a

value-transmission system through which educational institutions construct knowledge, transmit cultural and religious values, shape learners' identities, and reproduce institutional traditions across generations (Junaedi, 2025). Within Islamic education, curriculum extends beyond formal educational documents to encompass educational philosophy, pedagogical traditions, institutional culture, moral exemplarity, and the hidden curriculum that collectively influence students' intellectual, spiritual, and ethical development (Hendawi et al., 2024; Sirojuddin, 2022; Husen, 2026). Accordingly, the curriculum should be understood as a holistic educational system through which values are continuously internalized through learners' daily experiences rather than merely as an administrative instrument for organizing teaching and learning.

This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of Indonesian *pesantren*, which have historically functioned as indigenous Islamic educational institutions responsible for preserving classical Islamic scholarship while responding to changing social realities (Asrori, 2025). Within the *salaf* educational tradition, curriculum is inseparable from the study of *kitab kuning*, the *sorogan* and *bandongan* learning methods, the exemplary role of the *kiai*, and the communal life of the *pesantren*, all of which function simultaneously as educational means for transmitting Islamic values across generations (Fathul, 2025; Rosyid, 2025). Rather than separating cognitive learning from character formation, the *salaf* tradition integrates religious knowledge, ethical values, spiritual discipline, and social responsibility into a continuous educational process. This process shapes students' religious identity and prophetic leadership (Abidin, 2024; Shafwan & Asrori, 2026). Therefore, the curriculum of *pesantren* should be understood not merely as a formal instructional structure but as a living educational tradition in which formal curriculum, hidden curriculum, institutional culture, and exemplary leadership interact dynamically to cultivate Muslim personalities.

The strategic role of curriculum as a value-transmission system has become increasingly important amid contemporary socio-religious challenges characterized by religious polarization, ideological contestation, digital radicalization, and the rapid dissemination of exclusive religious narratives through social media (Faizin, 2025; Widyaningsih et al., 2026). These developments have intensified social

fragmentation and exposed younger generations to competing religious interpretations that often encourage exclusivism and intolerance. Consequently, Islamic educational institutions are expected not only to preserve authentic Islamic scholarship but also to foster balanced, inclusive, and socially responsible religious perspectives. Within this context, religious moderation (*wasatiyyah*) has emerged as a strategic paradigm emphasizing justice, balance, tolerance, inclusiveness, and peaceful coexistence while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic theological principles (Shafwan, 2022; Ichsan et al., 2024). Accordingly, Islamic education is challenged to internalize these values systematically through the curriculum, pedagogical practices, institutional culture, and students' everyday educational experiences so that moderation becomes an integral dimension of religious identity rather than merely a normative discourse (Huda, 2025; Rusmana et al., 2025; Muis, 2026).

Among Indonesian *pesantren*, Pesantren Al-Ikhlash provides a significant context for examining this issue because it consistently preserves the *salaf* educational tradition while simultaneously responding to contemporary educational challenges. Its curriculum combines classical Islamic scholarship with institutional culture, communal learning, moral discipline, and the exemplary leadership of the *kiai*, creating an educational environment in which religious values are transmitted through both formal and informal educational processes. Consequently, religious moderation is cultivated not solely through classroom instruction but through the interaction of curriculum philosophy, classical Islamic learning, pedagogical traditions, hidden curriculum, institutional culture, and students' lived experiences. Understanding this interaction is essential for explaining how moderation becomes structurally embedded within the curriculum rather than functioning merely as an educational objective.

Growing scholarly attention has consequently been directed toward understanding religious moderation within Islamic educational institutions. Previous studies have examined religious moderation through classroom learning models (Aisyah, 2023), students' religious attitudes and character formation (Budiyanto, 2024; Kharisma, 2025), the internalization of moderation values through classical Islamic texts (Nuha, 2026), and the cultivation of Islamic values within *pesantren*

education (Muzammil, 2020). Other scholars have emphasized the strategic roles of *kiai* leadership, institutional culture, local wisdom, and intellectual traditions in strengthening moderate Islamic attitudes and preventing radicalism (Aimah et al., 2026; Ma'arif, 2026; Setiawan, 2026; Mulianah et al., 2026). At the curriculum level, previous research has discussed curriculum anatomy, curriculum transformation, curriculum reconstruction, integrated curriculum management, and curriculum development in Islamic educational institutions (Husen, 2026; Junaedi, 2025; Sirojuddin, 2022). Furthermore, systematic evidence demonstrates that integrating religious moderation into the curriculum has become an important direction for the future development of Islamic education (Muis, 2026; Junaedi et al., 2025).

Although previous studies have significantly advanced scholarly discourse on Islamic education and religious moderation, important limitations remain. Existing research has generally conceptualized religious moderation as an educational outcome rather than as a curricular process embedded within educational philosophy, curriculum design, pedagogical practices, institutional culture, and the hidden curriculum. Furthermore, the available literature tends to examine curriculum, *kiai* leadership, institutional culture, and students' religious attitudes as separate domains, resulting in a fragmented understanding of how religious moderation is cultivated within the *pesantren salaf* tradition.

These limitations reveal theoretical, empirical, methodological, and contextual gaps. From a theoretical perspective, current scholarship has yet to conceptualize the curriculum as an integrated system of value transmission through which religious moderation is systematically nurtured. Empirically, evidence regarding the processes through which the values of religious moderation are internalized within *pesantren salaf* remains limited. Methodologically, only a small number of studies have employed an integrated analytical framework capable of explaining the dynamic interaction between curriculum components and the formation of religious moderation. Contextually, in-depth investigations of traditional *pesantren salaf* that preserve classical Islamic scholarship while simultaneously promoting religious moderation remain relatively scarce.

Accordingly, this study investigates how religious moderation is internalized through the curriculum of *Pesantren Al-Ikhlash* by analyzing the interrelationship

between its educational philosophy, curriculum structure, the teaching of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts), the pedagogical approaches of *sorogan* and *bandongan*, and the educational leadership of the *kiai*. Through this integrated perspective, the study seeks to demonstrate that religious moderation is not merely an educational outcome but a curricular process systematically embedded across the philosophical, pedagogical, cultural, and leadership dimensions of Islamic boarding school education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative intrinsic case study design to examine how religious moderation is internalized through the curriculum of Pesantren Al-Ikhlash, a traditional salaf Islamic boarding school in Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia. The case was purposively selected because it consistently preserves the salaf educational tradition through the teaching of *kitab kuning*, the *sorogan* and *bandongan* learning methods, strong *kiai* leadership, and an institutional culture that integrates religious moderation into both formal and informal pedagogical practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling. Participants were purposively selected based on their substantial knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the development and implementation of the pesantren curriculum. The primary participants included KH. Azhari Dipo Kusumo, the *kiai* (leader of the pesantren) and principal curriculum developer; Abdul Fattah, Lc.; Dr. Wada' Amani, M.Pd.I; Dr. Agus Purwantoro, M.Pd.I; and Dr. Nurdin, who serve as *ustaz* (Islamic teachers) and play active roles in curriculum implementation. In addition, several senior *santri* (students) who possessed extensive experience and a comprehensive understanding of curriculum implementation and the educational life of the pesantren were included as participants. Their diverse roles enabled the researcher to obtain multiple perspectives on how religious moderation is internalized through both the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum within the *salaf* educational tradition.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews explored curriculum philosophy,

educational objectives, pedagogical practices, and strategies for cultivating religious moderation. Observations focused on classroom instruction, kitab kuning learning, *sorogan* and *bandongan* pedagogy, religious activities, and everyday interactions within the pesantren. Documentary sources included curriculum documents, institutional regulations, vision and mission statements, instructional materials, and classical Islamic texts. The combination of these methods enabled data triangulation.¹⁹ Data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), involving data familiarization, coding, theme development, theme refinement, and interpretation. The analysis was guided by the concept of curriculum as a value-transmission system, focusing on seven interconnected dimensions: curriculum philosophy, curriculum structure, *kitab kuning* instruction, *sorogan* and *bandongan* pedagogy, *kiai* leadership, the hidden curriculum, and institutional culture. To ensure trustworthiness, the study² followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through triangulation, prolonged engagement, member checking, thick description, audit trails, reflexive memos, and peer debriefing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Curriculum Philosophy as the Foundation of Religious Moderation

The findings show that the curriculum of Pesantren Al-Ikhlash is grounded in a philosophy that views education as a holistic process of value transmission aimed at developing students with intellectual, moral, and spiritual integrity. Rather than treating religious moderation as a separate subject, it is embedded throughout the curriculum⁶ through the principles of *tawassuṭ* (moderation), *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), *tawāzun* (balance), and *i'tidāl* (justice), which guide curriculum design, pedagogy, institutional culture, and students' daily lives.

The preservation of the *salaf* tradition through the study of *kitab kuning* cultivates intellectual openness by exposing students to diverse juristic opinions (*ikhtilāf*) and scholarly traditions. Consequently, religious moderation is internalized²⁶ as an epistemological orientation rooted in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the tradition of *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah*, enabling students to appreciate legitimate differences as

an integral part of Islamic scholarship. The principal findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Curriculum Philosophy as the Foundation of Religious Moderation at Pesantren Al-Ikhlash

Curriculum Philosophy	Empirical Findings	Contribution to Religious Moderation
Educational orientation	Education develops intellectual, moral, and spiritual integrity beyond religious knowledge.	Moderation becomes the primary educational objective.
<i>Salaf</i> educational tradition	Preservation of <i>salaf</i> through the study of <i>kitab kuning</i> .	Classical scholarship provides the epistemological foundation for moderation.
Core Islamic values	<i>Tawassuṭ</i> , <i>tasāmuḥ</i> , <i>tawāzun</i> , and <i>i'tidāl</i> are embedded in curriculum and institutional culture.	Moderate values guide learning and daily pedagogical practices.
Understanding of <i>ikhtilāf</i>	Students study multiple juristic opinions and scholarly debates.	Respect for differences fosters intellectual humility and tolerance.
Curriculum orientation	Moderation is embedded throughout the curriculum rather than taught separately.	Moderation is internalized through both formal and hidden curricula.

The findings reinforce the view that the curriculum is fundamentally a system of value transmission rather than merely an instructional framework (Junaedi, 2025; Hendawi et al., 2024; Sirojuddin, 2022). In line with Asrori (2025), the pesantren curriculum integrates educational philosophy, institutional traditions, and culture, while supporting Abidin (2024) and Aimah et al. (2026), who emphasize the roles of ethical formation, kiai leadership, and institutional culture in fostering religious moderation. Unlike previous studies focusing on instructional models, students' attitudes, classical texts, or inclusive practices (Aisyah, 2023; Budiyanto, 2024; Kharisma, 2025; Nuha, 2026; Setiawan, 2026; Rusmana et al., 2025), this study demonstrates that moderation originates from curriculum philosophy and is systematically embedded in curriculum structure, pedagogy, institutional culture, the hidden curriculum, and students' everyday educational experiences. Thus, religious moderation is conceptualized not as an additional competency but as the philosophical foundation governing the entire educational process in the *salaf* pesantren tradition.

Classical Islamic Learning as the Epistemological Basis of Moderate Religious Understanding

The findings indicate that religious moderation at Pesantren Al-Ikhlash is primarily internalized through the systematic study of *kitab kuning* rather than through a separate moderation curriculum. Students develop balanced religious understanding by engaging with the Islamic intellectual tradition, enabling them to appreciate methodological diversity, ethical reasoning, and authoritative scholarship (Abidin, 2024; Hendawi et al., 2024; Shafwan & Asrori, 2026). The principal classical texts studied are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Classical Islamic Texts Studied at Pesantren Al-Ikhlash

Field of Study	Classical Text (<i>Kitab Kuning</i>)	Author
Theology (Tauhid)	<i>Al-'aqidah fī daw' al-kitāb wa al-sunnah (Al-¹⁶whīd).</i>	Shalih bin Fauzan Al-Fauzan
	<i>Al-'Aqidah al-Wāsiṭiyyah</i>	Ibn Taymiyyah
	<i>Al-'Aqidah al-Ḥamawīyyah</i>	Ibn Taymiyyah
Hadith	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i>	Imam al-Bukhārī
	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim</i>	Imam Muslim
	<i>Bulūgh al-Marām</i>	Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī
	<i>Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn</i>	Imam al-Nawawī
	<i>Arba'īn al-Nawawīyyah</i>	Imam al-Nawawī
	<i>Umdat al-Aḥkām</i>	Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī
Hadith	<i>Nukhbat al-Fikar</i>	Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī
Methodology	<i>Taisir Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth</i>	Mahmūd al-Ṭaḥḥān
Qur'anic Exegesis	<i>Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr</i>	Ibn Kathīr
	<i>Tafsīr al-Sa'dī</i>	Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Sa'dī
Islamic Jurisprudence	<i>Zād al-Mustaqni'</i>	Al-Ḥajjāwī
	<i>'Umdat al-Fiqh</i>	Ibn Qudāmah
	<i>Ar-Rawḍ al-Murbi'</i>	Al-Buhūtī
	<i>Bulūgh al-Marām (Fiqh</i>	Ibn Ḥajar
	<i>mmmentary)</i>	
Principles of Jurisprudence	<i>Al-Uṣūl min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl</i>	Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn
	<i>Waraqāt</i>	Imam al-Juwaynī
Ethics and Character	<i>Al-Adab al-Mufrad</i>	Imam al-Bukhārī
	<i>Hilyat Ṭālib al-'Ilm</i>	Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn
	<i>Al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib</i>	Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah

As shown in Table 2, the curriculum integrates theology, hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, jurisprudence, legal methodology, and ethics into a coherent body of Islamic knowledge. This integration enables students to understand religious teachings within a comprehensive epistemological framework rather than as isolated doctrines.

Classroom observations revealed that these texts are taught through the traditional *sorogan* and *bandongan* methods, which emphasize textual analysis, legal reasoning, and direct teacher–student interaction instead of rote memorization. Students are also introduced to diverse juristic opinions (*ikhtilāf*), fostering intellectual humility, respect for scholarly diversity, and balanced religious reasoning (Fathul Jannah, 2025; Rosyid, 2025; Husen, 2026; Ichsan et al., 2024; Shafwan, 2022).

The findings further highlight the central role of the *kiai* as an epistemic authority who contextualizes classical scholarship through formal instruction and daily mentoring. This guidance enables students to internalize moderation as an intellectual disposition grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the classical Islamic tradition rather than as a behavioral slogan (Aimah et al., 2026; Hidayat, 2025; Ma'arif, 2026).

Overall, this study extends previous scholarship by demonstrating that religious moderation in Pesantren Al-Ikhlash originates from the internal epistemology of classical Islamic scholarship. The integrated study of theology, jurisprudence, hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, legal methodology, and ethics systematically cultivates methodological competence, intellectual openness, and balanced religious understanding, thereby strengthening students' resilience against exclusivist and literalist interpretations.

Sorogan and Bandongan Pedagogies as Mechanisms for Internalizing Religious Moderation

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The findings demonstrate that the traditional pedagogies of *sorogan* and *bandongan* are central to the curriculum of Pesantren Al-Ikhlash in internalizing religious moderation. Beyond transmitting religious knowledge, these methods integrate cognitive learning, ethical formation, and religious attitudes, confirming

that the pesantren curriculum encompasses both educational content and pedagogical processes (Junaedi, 2025).

Through sorogan, students receive intensive guidance from the *kiai*, who not only correct textual understanding but also cultivate intellectual humility, discipline, sincerity, and respect for scholarly differences. Meanwhile, *bandongan* exposes students to diverse juristic opinions (*ikhtilāf*) and their evidential foundations, encouraging balanced reasoning, intellectual openness, and tolerance while maintaining commitment to Islamic teachings (Fathul Jannah, 2025; Rosyid, 2025; Husen, 2026; Ichsan et al., 2024; Huda et al., 2025; Shafwan, 2022).

Field observations further reveal that these pedagogies simultaneously transmit classical Islamic knowledge, ethical reasoning, religious attitudes, and *adab*, embedding moderation within everyday learning rather than as a separate curricular topic. The *kiai* also serves as a living model of moderate religious conduct through respectful dialogue and contextual interpretation of classical texts, reinforcing the findings of previous studies on the importance of *kiai* leadership in promoting religious moderation (Budiyanto, 2024; Kharisma, 2025; Muzammil, 2020; Ullin Nuha, 2026; Aimah et al., 2026; Abidin, 2024; Hidayat, 2025; Ma'arif, 2026). This study extends curriculum scholarship by showing that *sorogan* and *bandongan* are not merely teaching methods but culturally embedded pedagogical mechanisms through which pesantren continuously preserve and transmit moderate Islamic values across generations (Muis, 2026; Setiawan, 2026).

Hidden Curriculum and Institutional Culture in Constructing Moderate Religious Identity

The findings demonstrate that the hidden curriculum plays a central role in constructing a moderate religious identity at Pesantren Al-Ikhlas. Religious moderation is internalized not only through formal instruction but also through the pesantren's institutional culture, where values are embodied in everyday social practices rather than taught as abstract concepts (Sirojuddin, 2022).

Participant observations showed that daily activities—including congregational prayers, collaborative learning, musyawarah, communal service, and respectful interactions with the *kiai*, teachers, and peers—systematically cultivate discipline, responsibility, mutual respect, cooperation, and tolerance (Muzammil,

2020; Aisyah, 2023; Budiyanto, 2024). The *kiai* further reinforce these values by modeling humility, inclusive dialogue, and respect for differing opinions, supporting previous studies on the importance of leadership and pesantren culture in fostering religious moderation (Aimah et al., 2026; Abidin, 2024; Hidayat, 2025).

The diverse regional, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds of students also create authentic opportunities to practice dialogue, collaboration, and appreciation of differences, enabling moderation to develop as a lived social practice rather than merely a theological concept (Ichsan et al., 2024; Surawardi et al., 2024; Mulianah et al., 2026; Widyaningsih et al., 2026). Consequently, the hidden curriculum reinforces the formal curriculum by transforming values such as tolerance, discipline, cooperation, and respect for diversity into everyday habits (Kharisma, 2025; Rusmana et al., 2025; Muis, 2026).

⁴¹ This study demonstrates that the formal curriculum, traditional pedagogy, *kiai* leadership, and institutional culture function as an integrated educational system for transmitting moderate Islamic values. Thus, the successful internalization of religious moderation depends not only on curriculum content but also on the educational ecosystem that enables these values to be consistently practiced in daily life (Junaidi et al., 2025; Setiawan, 2026; Shafwan & Asrori, 2026).

Kiai Leadership as the Integrative Agent of Curriculum Implementation

The findings identify *kiai* leadership as the key mechanism integrating curriculum philosophy, pedagogy, institutional culture, and students' daily learning experiences at Pesantren Al-Ikhlash. Beyond administrative responsibilities, the *kiai* interprets, exemplifies, and transmits curricular values through personal authority and exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), confirming that curriculum implementation in pesantren is inseparable from moral leadership (Junaedi, 2025).

Interviews revealed that students regard the *kiai* as their primary reference for understanding classical Islamic texts, addressing contemporary religious issues, and developing balanced religious perspectives. By consistently demonstrating humility, fairness, openness to scholarly diversity, and respect for differing opinions, the *kiai* enables students to experience religious moderation as a lived reality (Abidin, 2024; Aimah et al., 2026; Hidayat, 2025).

Teachers further emphasized that the success of curriculum implementation depends on the consistency between institutional philosophy and the *kiai's* daily example. Observations also showed that the *kiai* reinforces moderation through communal worship, dialogue, conflict mediation, and everyday interactions, integrating the formal and hidden curricula into a unified educational process (Budiyanto, 2024; Aisyah, 2023; Setiawan, 2026; Muzammil, 2020; Kharisma, 2025; Rusmana et al., 2025).

This study extends previous scholarship by positioning *kiai* leadership as an integral component of curriculum implementation rather than merely an external institutional factor. Curriculum philosophy, pedagogical practices, institutional culture, and *kiai* leadership operate as a unified system for transmitting moderate Islamic values across generations (Hendawi et al., 2024; Junaidi et al., 2025; Muis, 2026).

Curriculum as an Integrated Value-Transmission System

The findings synthesize the preceding analyses into a conceptual framework showing that the curriculum at Pesantren Al-Ikhlash functions as an integrated value-transmission system. Religious moderation emerges not from a single curricular component but through the interaction of curriculum philosophy, the study of *kitab kuning*, *sorogan* and *bandongan* pedagogies, *kiai* leadership, the hidden curriculum, and institutional culture. Together, these elements form a coherent educational ecosystem that continuously transmits and internalizes moderate Islamic values (Junaedi, 2025; Sirojuddin, 2022)

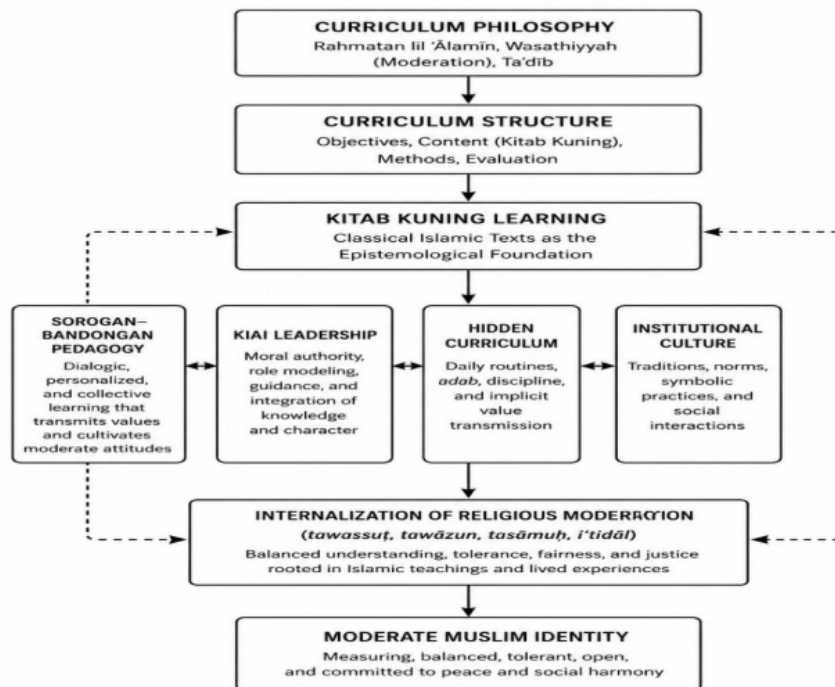


Figure 1. Framework of Internalizing Religious Moderation

The findings show that curriculum philosophy provides the normative foundation, *kitab kuning* establishes the epistemological basis, *sorogan* and *bandongan* facilitate value internalization, *kiai* leadership integrates all curriculum components, and the hidden curriculum reinforces these values through everyday pedagogical practices. As a result, moderation is cultivated through the interaction of formal and informal learning rather than through classroom instruction alone (Budiyanto, 2024; Rusmana et al., 2025; Setiawan, 2026; Fathul Jannah, 2025; Rosyid, 2025; Husen, 2026; Shafwan & Asrori, 2026).

This model extends curriculum theory by positioning *kiai* leadership as an intrinsic curricular component rather than an external institutional factor (Abidin, 2024; Aimah et al., 2026; Hidayat, 2025; Ma'arif, 2026). It also addresses the identified theoretical, empirical, methodological, and contextual gaps by conceptualizing curriculum as an integrated value-transmission system and providing evidence from a *salaf* pesantren where religious moderation is institutionalized through the interaction of philosophy, pedagogy, leadership,



institutional culture, and the hidden curriculum (Junaidi et al., 2025; Muis, 2026; Mulianah et al., 2026; Ikhsan, 2026).

The study demonstrates that the sustainability of moderate Muslim identity depends on the systematic integration of curriculum philosophy, classical Islamic scholarship, pedagogy, *kiai* leadership, institutional culture, and the hidden curriculum. This integrated framework offers a novel model for understanding curriculum as a multidimensional value-transmission system in contemporary Islamic education (Huda et al., 2025; Phan-ae et al., 2023).

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CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the curriculum of Pesantren Al-Ikhlah functions as an integrated value-transmission system for internalizing religious moderation. Rather than treating moderation as a separate subject, the curriculum embeds the values of *tawassuʿ*, *tawāzun*, *tasāmuḥ*, and *iʿtidāl* through the integration of curriculum philosophy, *kitab kuning*, *sorogan* and *bandongan* pedagogies, *kiai* leadership, the hidden curriculum, and institutional culture. The interaction of these components creates a holistic educational ecosystem in which moderate Islamic values are continuously practiced and internalized.

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The findings further show that *kitab kuning* provides the epistemological foundation for moderate religious understanding, while *sorogan* and *bandongan* cultivate intellectual humility, ethical conduct (*adab*), respect for scholarly diversity, and constructive dialogue. These processes are strengthened by the *kiai*, whose exemplary leadership integrates the formal and hidden curricula into students' everyday educational experiences.

Theoretically, this study contributes to curriculum scholarship by proposing a curriculum model as an integrated value-transmission system demonstrating that religious moderation emerges through the interaction of curriculum philosophy, classical Islamic scholarship, pedagogy, leadership, institutional culture, and students' lived experiences. Practically, the findings suggest that promoting religious moderation requires a holistic curriculum rather than additional subjects or isolated programs. Future research should examine the applicability of this model across

different types of pesantren and Muslim educational institutions in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

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