

Research article

Beyond Pedagogy: Halaqah and Socio-Epistemic Reproduction of Religious Moderation in West Sumatra, Indonesia

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Abstract

While religious moderation is frequently analyzed as a normative state policy or curricular content, less attention is given to the socio-epistemic mechanisms through which moderate dispositions are historically produced and embodied. This study examines the construction and reproduction of religious moderation within the Minangkabau *surau-halaqah-pesantren* tradition by conceptualizing *halaqah* as an indigenous epistemic system rather than merely a pedagogical method. Utilizing a qualitative approach framed by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis involving *tuanku*, *ustaz*, *santri*, and administrators across five distinct educational sites. Grounded in Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory and Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the findings reveal that *halaqah* operates as a socio-epistemic mechanism integrating *ta'lim* (knowledge transmission), *tarbiyah* (character formation), and *tazkiyah* (spiritual cultivation) through *talaqqi*, *kitab kuning* study, *sanad* continuity, and *adab*-based interaction. Within the Minangkabau cultural philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), religious moderation is reproduced not as an externally imposed doctrine, but as an embodied disposition mediated by local cultural rationality and transregional Islamic intellectual networks. This study advances Islamic education and sociology of religion scholarship by demonstrating that sustainable religious moderation relies on historically rooted, institutionally embedded systems of knowledge reproduction and ethical habituation.

Keywords

Halaqah; Islamic Education; Minangkabau; Religious Moderation; Surau.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation has increasingly become a significant subject of inquiry in contemporary Islamic studies (Azra, 2013; Rohman et al., 2026), not merely because of the growing prevalence of religious intolerance, polarization, and exclusivist narratives, but more fundamentally because it raises an epistemological question regarding how particular religious orientations are socially constructed, legitimized, and reproduced within Muslim societies (Apipudin & Machmudi, 2026; Armi & Azhari, 2025; Azra, 2017). Although religious moderation is commonly articulated through normative principles such as *wasatīyyah* (balance), tolerance, justice, and the rejection of extremism (Azzahra et al., 2025; Fathurahman, 2008), such formulations primarily describe the ideal content of moderation rather than the social mechanisms through which moderate religious dispositions are formed and sustained (Erasiah & Zain, 2025; Fajria & Fahmi, 2026; Hamka, 1974). Recent studies suggest that the persistence of intolerance and the contestation of religious authority, particularly within educational and digital environments, reflect a complex process of knowledge transmission, meaning construction, and value internalization rather than merely a deficiency in normative religious understanding (Nasution, 1991; Nora et al., 2026; Nugroho & Rochmat, 2024). From the perspective of Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory, religious attitudes are not simply derived from doctrinal teachings but are produced through the dialectical processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization that transform particular interpretations into socially recognized realities. Religious moderation may be analytically understood as a socially reproduced religious disposition whose continuity depends upon institutional mechanisms that construct, transmit, and legitimize religious knowledge, authority, and values across generations (Syah et al., 2026; Wahidi et al., 2025).

Within the field of Islamic education, the formation of religious moderation is increasingly understood as an epistemic and pedagogical process rather than merely the transmission of normative religious doctrines (Rizal & Ramadhan, 2025; Salam et al., 2026). Contemporary scholarship argues that educational institutions play a decisive role in shaping religious reasoning, moral judgment, and socio-religious dispositions through the systematic transmission of knowledge, authority, and values (Navis, 1994; Nizar, 2007; Riyanto & Sulong, 2025). In this perspective, moderation is not produced through the memorization of ethical principles alone but through educational experiences that enable learners to negotiate religious texts, social realities, and cultural diversity in a reflective and contextual manner (Nasution, 1991; Nizar, 2007; Syapitri et al., 2025). This argument resonates with Fazlur Rahman's theory of

the *double movement*, which emphasizes the continuous interaction between the historical meanings of religious texts and the changing realities of contemporary society in the construction of Islamic understanding. Islamic education functions not merely as a site of religious instruction but as a socio-epistemic arena in which particular religious worldviews are constructed, internalized, and reproduced, thereby shaping how individuals understand difference, authority, and coexistence within plural social contexts (Giling et al., 2025; Nugroho & Rochmat, 2024).

Among Islamic educational institutions, pesantren have received considerable scholarly attention as socio-cultural spaces through which religious knowledge, authority, and values are continuously reproduced across generations (Afdhal et al., 2025; Kallabe et al., 2026). Unlike formal educational settings that primarily emphasize curricular transmission, pesantren cultivate religious dispositions through the integration of formal instruction, daily interaction, institutional culture, and the exemplary authority of religious teachers (*kiai*, *ustaz*, or *tuanku*) (Syahputra & Rahman, 2026; Wahidin et al., 2023). This process reflects what Bourdieu (1977) conceptualizes as *habitus*, namely the formation of durable dispositions through repeated social practices that gradually shape individual perceptions, judgments, and actions. Recent studies demonstrate that the internalization of religious moderation within Islamic educational institutions is closely associated with pedagogical traditions that promote dialogue, respect for differences, ethical discipline, and the contextual understanding of religious teachings (Erawadi & Setiadi, 2024; Hadi & Kurniawan, 2025). Traditional Islamic educational institutions should not be understood merely as centers of religious instruction, but as socio-pedagogical environments that continuously reproduce particular forms of religious consciousness, including orientations toward moderation, tolerance, and social coexistence (Hamzah, 2026; Marzuki et al., 2025).

The Minangkabau context offers a particularly significant setting for examining the social construction of religious moderation due to its long-standing integration of Islamic teachings and local socio-cultural traditions (Arbainsyah et al., 2026; Elfira, 2007). This relationship is institutionally and philosophically embodied in the principle of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), which positions Islamic norms and customary values as mutually reinforcing foundations of social life (Rosa et al., 2026). Historically, Islamic intellectual traditions in Minangkabau developed through networks of *ulama*, *surau*, and scholarly transmission that connected local religious communities with broader Islamic intellectual centers in the Malay-Indonesian world and the Middle East (Alfurqan et al., 2025; Azra, 2017; Vidhiputri, 2026). In this setting, the *surau* functioned not merely as a place of worship

but as a socio-educational institution responsible for transmitting religious knowledge, shaping moral character, and cultivating collective religious identities (Nizar, 2007; Wasim et al., 2026). The enduring interaction between Islamic scholarship, local wisdom, and communal life has produced a distinctive religious culture characterized by negotiation, adaptation, and social accommodation (Khojir et al., 2025; Najib et al., 2026). The Minangkabau Islamic tradition represents an important socio-historical arena for understanding how religious moderation is embedded, reproduced, and sustained through locally rooted educational institutions and cultural practices (Mubarak et al., 2026; Wahidin et al., 2023).

Within the Minangkabau *surau* tradition, the *halaqah* constitutes the core pedagogical structure through which religious knowledge, scholarly authority, and ethical values are transmitted across generations (Widodo et al., 2026). *Halaqah* is not merely a learning method characterized by direct interaction between teacher and students, but an epistemic system that integrates knowledge transmission (*ta'lim*), character formation (*tarbiyah*), and spiritual cultivation (*tazkiyah*) within a continuous process of religious socialization (Isnaeniah et al., 2026; Ramli et al., 2025). Through practices such as *talaqqī*, textual study, dialogical engagement, and exemplary guidance from the *tuanku* or *syekh*, the *halaqah* tradition facilitates not only the acquisition of religious knowledge but also the internalization of dispositions, norms, and modes of religious reasoning that shape how learners understand authority, difference, and communal life (Noor et al., 2026; Rusmana et al., 2025). Syahril et al. (2024) further argue that the persistence of the *halaqah* system in West Sumatra is inseparable from its embeddedness in local socio-cultural structures, which enable the transmission of religious values through both formal instruction and everyday communal interaction. *Halaqah* may be understood as a socio-pedagogical mechanism through which religious moderation is reproduced, not as an abstract doctrine, but as a lived disposition continuously cultivated through educational practice, institutional culture, and community life (Subairi et al., 2025; Wasim et al., 2026).

Despite the growing body of scholarship on religious moderation in Islamic education, existing studies have largely focused on policy implementation, curriculum development, character education, and the institutional transformation of *pesantren* and *madrasah* (Ramli et al., 2025; Rusmana et al., 2025). Other studies have examined the pedagogical effectiveness of *halaqah* in strengthening students' religious understanding, moral development, and spiritual formation (Noor et al., 2026; Ramli et al., 2025). However, these studies tend to approach *halaqah* primarily as an instructional model or educational method, paying limited attention to its broader role

as a socio-cultural institution through which religious authority, collective values, and moderation-oriented dispositions are historically constructed and reproduced. Similarly, while (Syahril et al., 2024) have demonstrated the relevance of religious moderation within the *halaqah* tradition of West Sumatran pesantren, the underlying social processes that enable moderation values to persist across generations remain insufficiently theorized. Consequently, a significant gap persists in understanding how the *halaqah* system within the Minangkabau *surau* tradition functions as a historical, pedagogical, and sociological mechanism for constructing and reproducing religious moderation (Aqodiah et al., 2026; Syahril et al., 2025).

In response to this gap, the present study examines how religious moderation is constructed, internalized, and reproduced within the *halaqah* education system of the Minangkabau *surau* tradition in West Sumatra. Rather than approaching *halaqah* merely as a pedagogical method, this study conceptualizes it as a socio-pedagogical institution through which religious knowledge, authority, cultural values, and communal norms are continuously negotiated and transmitted across generations. By integrating Berger and Luckmann's theory of the social construction of reality with the socio-historical tradition of Minangkabau Islamic education, this study seeks to explain the mechanisms through which moderation-oriented religious dispositions are sustained within local educational institutions. The novelty of this study lies in its positioning of *halaqah* not only as a traditional learning system but also as a historical and sociological locus for the production and reproduction of religious moderation. Accordingly, this study contributes to the development of Islamic education scholarship, religious moderation studies, and the sociology of religion by offering a locally grounded yet theoretically informed framework for understanding how moderate religious orientations are cultivated and sustained within plural Muslim societies.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design situated within an interpretivist–constructivist paradigm, which assumes that social reality is continuously constituted through social interaction, shared meanings, and cultural practices rather than existing as an objective entity (Miles et al., 2014; Sugiyono, 2024). Methodologically, the study adopted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to examine how religious moderation is experienced, interpreted, and internalized by educational actors within the *halaqah* system of West Sumatra. The use of IPA was

informed by its epistemological compatibility with the study's objective of understanding the lived experiences and meaning-making processes through which moderation-oriented religious dispositions are formed in everyday educational practice (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Consistent with Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction, this study conceptualizes *halaqah* as a socio-religious institution through which religious knowledge, authority, values, and collective meanings are continuously produced and transmitted across generations.

Accordingly, fieldwork was conducted from February to October 2024 across five purposively selected sites in West Sumatra (Padang City, Padang Pariaman, Solok, Sijunjung, and West Pasaman), representing complementary institutional configurations of *halaqah*-based Islamic education, including urban *pesantren* integrating classical *halaqah* with formal schooling, historically rooted *surau*-based learning within the Minangkabau tradition, traditional *pesantren* preserving *halaqah* while adapting to contemporary educational reforms, and *halaqah* operating within socially heterogeneous communities. Collectively, these sites provided theoretically relevant institutional variation for examining how religious moderation is socially constructed and reproduced across diverse educational contexts.

Across these research sites, participants comprised *tuanku*, *ustaz*, *santri*, and *pesantren* administrators who had direct and sustained engagement with *halaqah* practices. Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling to ensure the inclusion of information-rich cases capable of providing in-depth insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Flick, 2022; Maxwell, 2022). Recruitment and data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached, indicating that no substantively new meanings or interpretive patterns emerged (Johnson & Christensen, 2023; Manen, 2016).

Data were generated through three complementary methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis, enabling methodological and source (Arikunto, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Interviews explored participants' lived experiences and interpretations of *halaqah* and religious moderation; participant observation documented pedagogical interactions, *talaqqi* traditions, and the everyday enactment of moderation-oriented values; while documentary analysis examined *kitab kuning*, institutional archives, curricula, and other educational records that contextualized the *halaqah* tradition.

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis through iterative processes of familiarization, coding, theme development, review,

and interpretive abstraction. The resulting themes were interpreted through Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction and Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to explain how moderation-oriented dispositions are socially constructed, institutionalized, embodied, and reproduced within the *halaqah* system. Methodological rigor was ensured through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability by employing prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checking, thick description, audit trails, and reflexive interpretation. Ethical integrity was maintained through informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respect for the socio-cultural and religious norms of participating *pesantren* communities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Halaqah as an Epistemic System of Islamic Knowledge*

The findings demonstrate that the *halaqah* tradition within the Minangkabau *surau-pesantren* continuum functions not merely as a pedagogical mechanism for the transmission of Islamic teachings, but as an institutionalized epistemic system through which religious knowledge, scholarly authority, ethical values, and socio-religious consciousness are continuously produced, legitimized, and reproduced across generations (Hermanto et al., 2026). In contrast to perspectives that reduce halaqah to a traditional instructional method, empirical evidence reveals that its significance lies in its ability to integrate *ta'lim* (knowledge transmission), *tarbiyah* (character formation), and *tazkiyah* (spiritual cultivation) into a unified educational framework. Consistent with Nizar's (2007) conception of the *surau* as a socio-religious institution and Azra's (2013) analysis of the genealogy of Minangkabau Islamic scholarship, halaqah operates through interconnected mechanisms of *talaqqi*, *sharh al-kutub*, sanad-based transmission, textual repetition, and the cultivation of *adab*, thereby establishing a learning environment in which intellectual formation is inseparable from moral and social development (Mubarak et al., 2026).

Within this configuration, the *tuanku* or *kiai* occupies a strategic position not primarily as an administrative leader but as an epistemic authority whose legitimacy regulates the validation of knowledge, the interpretation of religious texts, and the construction of religious truth within the educational community. The *surau* and *pesantren* emerge not simply as educational institutions but as epistemic arenas in which religious moderation is cultivated through historically embedded systems of knowledge production and socialization (Subairi et al., 2025).

For instance, Pondok Pesantren Calau, located in Nagari Calau, Sijunjung Regency, West Sumatra, reflects the institutional continuity of the *halaqah* tradition within a contemporary *pesantren* setting. The observed condition demonstrates that the *halaqah* remains embedded in an educational environment in which religious learning, pedagogical authority, and collective religious life function as an integrated institutional system rather than as isolated instructional activities. This institutional configuration underpins the sustained transmission of Islamic knowledge and values, enabling the *halaqah* to serve as a social space where moderation-oriented religious dispositions are continuously cultivated through everyday educational practices.

At the micro-pedagogical level, the findings reveal that *halaqah* operates through a multilayered epistemic mechanism that systematically transforms religious knowledge into religious disposition. This process corresponds closely to Azra (2017) epistemic integration framework and Fazlur Rahman's (1982) conception of Islamic intellectual development, wherein learning progresses through the interconnected dimensions of *know-what*, *know-how*, and *know-why*. At the level of *know-what*, *santri* acquire textual literacy through engagement with the *kitab kuning* tradition, thereby mastering linguistic structures, jurisprudential reasoning, and classical Islamic intellectual frameworks. At the level of *know-how*, knowledge is embodied through ritual practice, ethical discipline, collective worship, and sustained interaction with teachers and peers (Afdhal et al., 2025; Isnaeniah et al., 2026). Finally, at the level of *know-why*, *santri* develop reflexive and contextual modes of reasoning that enable them to connect scriptural teachings with contemporary social realities. The findings indicate that repetition within *halaqah* functions not as mechanical memorization but as a recursive epistemic process through which meanings are continuously deepened, negotiated, and contextualized. As a result, moderation emerges not as a normative doctrine transmitted through formal instruction, but as an epistemic orientation grounded in interpretive depth, contextual understanding, and reflective religious reasoning (Rosyad et al., 2026; Syahril et al., 2024).

Table 1. Epistemic Components of Halaqah in the Construction of Religious Moderation

Epistemic Dimension	Empirical Manifestation in Halaqah	Social Construction Mechanism	Contribution to Religious Moderation
Knowledge Transmission (<i>Ta'lim</i>)	<i>Talaqqi</i> , <i>sharḥ al-kutub</i> , sanad-based learning, textual repetition	Externalization of religious knowledge through pedagogical interaction	Development of contextual and non-literalist religious understanding
Ethical Formation (<i>Adab</i>)	Respect for teachers, learning discipline, communicative ethics, collective responsibility	Objectivation of values into institutional norms and educational culture	Formation of tolerance, humility, and social sensitivity
Scholarly Authority	<i>Tuanku/kiai</i> as epistemic gatekeeper and moral exemplar	Legitimation of authority through sanad continuity and communal recognition	Prevention of fragmented authority and exclusivist interpretations
Religious Habituation	Collective worship, communal learning, spiritual discipline, everyday interaction	Internalization through repetitive social practice	Emergence of moderation as an embodied religious disposition
Epistemic Reflexivity	Contextual interpretation of texts and contemporary issues	Reflexive reconstruction of religious meanings	Development of adaptive and balanced religious reasoning
Integration of <i>Adat</i> and <i>Syarak</i>	Internalization of ABS-SBK values within educational practice	Institutionalization of local Islamic cultural norms	Strengthening coexistence and recognition of social diversity

Source: Synthesized from field findings and interpreted through Berger and Luckmann (1966), Bourdieu (1977), Fazlur Rahman (1982), Azra (2013), and Prasetia (2025).

The analytical pattern presented in Table 1 demonstrates that the production of religious moderation within the *halaqah* system cannot be explained solely through curricular content or doctrinal instruction. Rather, moderation emerges through a comprehensive process of social construction that involves the interaction among knowledge transmission, ethical formation, authority structures, religious habituation, and contextual reasoning. This finding becomes clearer when interpreted through Berger and Luckmann's (1966) dialectical model of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. At the stage of externalization, moderation-related values are enacted through pedagogical practices such as respectful interaction, disciplined participation in *halaqah* circles, collective worship, and the exemplary conduct of religious teachers. These practices subsequently undergo objectivation as they become institutionalized

within the normative order of the surau and pesantren, transforming initially intersubjective experiences into socially recognized realities that regulate behavior and religious engagement (Ramli et al., 2025; Widodo et al., 2026). Through prolonged participation in this environment, *santri* internalize these institutional meanings into their subjective consciousness, resulting in dispositions characterized by *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and recognition of plurality. The findings therefore indicate that moderation is reproduced primarily through a hidden curriculum embedded within everyday social interaction rather than through explicit doctrinal instruction alone. This finding extends previous studies on religious moderation in pesantren by providing a more systematic explanation of the sociological mechanisms through which moderation becomes a lived social reality.

More fundamentally, the study reveals that the enduring capacity of *halaqah* to construct religious moderation lies in its ability to maintain epistemic continuity while simultaneously enabling contextual adaptation. The transformation of surau into pesantren has altered organizational structures and educational administration, yet it has not disrupted the underlying epistemology of knowledge production. The core elements of *sanad*-based authority, dialogical engagement with classical texts, ethical discipline, and communal religious life remain structurally preserved and continuously reproduced within contemporary educational settings. This continuity generates what Bourdieu (1977) conceptualizes as a religious habitus, namely a durable system of dispositions that shapes how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to social realities. Within this habitus, moderation is not experienced as an externally imposed ideological agenda but as a naturalized orientation embedded within everyday religious practice, intellectual reasoning, and communal interaction (Khasanah et al., 2023; Mubarak et al., 2026).

Theoretically, these findings advance the sociology of Islamic education by proposing that *halaqah* should be understood as an integrated epistemic rationality system in which knowledge, authority, ethics, and social practice operate as mutually reinforcing dimensions of religious formation. Religious moderation within the Minangkabau Islamic tradition emerges as the cumulative outcome of a historically rooted epistemic structure that continuously links textual knowledge, embodied practice, and contextual interpretation, thereby producing a form of religiosity that is intellectually grounded, socially adaptive, and capable of sustaining coexistence within plural social contexts (Hamzah, 2026; Khojir et al., 2025).

3.2 The Production of Islamic Scholarly Habitus and the Construction of Religious Moderation

Bourdieu's (1977) theory of habitus explains that social practices, when repeatedly performed within a particular field, gradually become embodied dispositions that shape individual cognition, ethical orientation, and social behavior. The findings demonstrate that the *halaqah* tradition within the Minangkabau surau–pesantren continuum functions not merely as a pedagogical mechanism for transmitting Islamic knowledge, but as an institutionalized system of habitus production through which santri develop particular patterns of religious reasoning and social engagement. Within this structure, *talaqqi*, *kitab kuning* learning, textual repetition, and teacher-mediated interaction operate as mechanisms that transform knowledge into embodied practice (Marzuki et al., 2025; Najib et al., 2026). Geertz's (1973) conception of religion as a cultural system further clarifies how these repeated educational practices function as symbolic processes that reproduce religious meanings, authority relations, and moral orientations in everyday life. *Halaqah* produces an Islamic scholarly habitus characterized by textual discipline, ethical awareness, and contextual religious understanding, where knowledge is constructed through collective scholarly transmission rather than individual interpretation alone (Azra, 2013; Nizar, 2007; Syahputra & Rahman, 2026; Syahril et al., 2025).



Figure 1. Kitab kuning learning through the halaqah tradition at Pondok Pesantren Syekh Amiludin, Nagari Aie Angek, Solok Regency.

As presented in Figure 1, the *kitab kuning* learning process at Pondok Pesantren Syekh Amiludin, located in Nagari Aie Angek, Solok Regency, West Sumatra, demonstrates the central role of the *halaqah* tradition in sustaining the transmission of classical Islamic scholarship. The findings indicate that learning is organized through

direct interaction between *ustaz* and *santri*, enabling the conveyance of religious knowledge alongside the gradual internalization of ethical values and learning discipline. This pedagogical pattern positions *halaqah* not only as an instructional approach but also as a continuous educational practice through which religious understanding and character formation are developed simultaneously. Bourdieu (1977) argues that habitus is produced through the relationship between objective structures and repeated social practices, allowing external norms to become internalized dispositions. This mechanism is evident in the *halaqah* system through the interaction between cognitive formation, ethical cultivation, and social relations.

At the cognitive level, *talaqqi* repetition generates intellectual discipline by shaping how *santri* interpret texts, recognize scholarly authority, and construct religious meanings within the classical Islamic epistemological tradition (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025; Fathurahman, 2008). At the ethical level, Al-Attas' (1995) concept of *adab* demonstrates that knowledge acquisition is inseparable from moral formation and the recognition of epistemic order, making the relationship between *kiai* and *santri* a symbolic mechanism through which authority becomes internalized as ethical disposition rather than external control. The circular structure of *halaqah* creates a social learning environment where hierarchical guidance and horizontal interaction coexist, producing dialogue, humility, and openness toward difference (Nasution, 1991; Nora et al., 2026).

Table 2. Mechanisms of Islamic Scholarly Habitus Production through Halaqah

Dimension of Habitus Formation	Empirical Manifestation in Halaqah	Mechanism of Production	Contribution to Religious Moderation
Cognitive Habitus	<i>Talaqqi</i> repetition and <i>kitab kuning</i> interpretation	Internalisation of structured scholarly reasoning	Contextual and reflective religious understanding
Ethical Habitus	<i>Adab</i> toward <i>kiai</i> , discipline, humility	Embodiment of moral values through repetition	Development of tolerance and responsibility
Scholarly Authority	<i>Kiai</i> as epistemic and moral reference	Legitimation through symbolic authority and sanad continuity	Prevention of fragmented and exclusivist interpretations
Social Habitus	Collective <i>halaqah</i> interaction	Reproduction of communal learning patterns	Strengthening dialogue and recognition of diversity

Dimension of Habitus Formation	Empirical Manifestation in Halaqah	Mechanism of Production	Contribution to Religious Moderation
Epistemic Balance	Integration of text, practice, and context	Formation of reflexive religious reasoning	Cultivation of <i>tawazun</i> and rejection of extremism

Source: Synthesized from field findings and interpreted through Bourdieu (1977), Geertz (1973), Al-Attas (1995), Fazlur Rahman (1982), and related studies.

The analytical pattern presented in Table 2 indicates that religious moderation within halaqah emerges through the embodiment of social practices rather than through explicit doctrinal instruction. Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of embodied habitus explains that values become stable orientations when they are repeatedly enacted within a social environment, becoming part of an individual’s practical consciousness. The findings show that *tasamuh* (tolerance) develops through everyday interaction, where santri learn to engage with differences of interpretation within a disciplined scholarly framework, transforming tolerance from a normative concept into an embodied social disposition (Alfarabi et al., 2025; Apipudin & Machmudi, 2026).



Figure 2. Pondok Pesantren Madinatul ‘Ilmi Islamiyah, Padang Pariaman Regency.

As presented in Figure 2, Pondok Pesantren Madinatul ‘Ilmi Islamiyah, located in Korong Buluh Kasok, Nagari Sungai Sariak, VII Koto Sungai Sariak District, Padang Pariaman Regency, West Sumatra, represents a *pesantren* environment in which the *halaqah* tradition remains institutionally embedded within everyday educational practices. The findings indicate that the institutional setting supports the continuity of *halaqah* by integrating the transmission of Islamic knowledge, pedagogical interaction, and religious habituation into a coherent learning process. This institutional context reinforces the sustained internalization of religious values and moderation-oriented dispositions through the routine educational and communal life of the *pesantren*. Likewise, *tawazun* (balance) is achieved through the ability to connect textual authority, religious practice, and social reality in proportion. Rahman’s (1982)

contextual approach to Islamic reasoning supports this process by emphasizing the relationship between textual meaning and historical context. Therefore, *halaqah* constructs an epistemic moderation that avoids rigid literalism and uncontrolled relativism, while the authority of kiai and the regulation of adab function as internal mechanisms that prevent fragmented religious reasoning and exclusivist tendencies (Armi & Azhari, 2025; Erasiah & Zain, 2025; Fajria & Fahmi, 2026).

Bourdieu's (1977) concept of field further explains that the continuity of salaf pesantren should be understood not merely as resistance toward modernization but as the preservation of an autonomous knowledge system. The findings reveal that the persistence of *halaqah*, *kitab kuning*, and *talaqqi* represents an epistemological strategy through which pesantren maintain intellectual continuity, symbolic authority, and coherence of religious knowledge production. Geertz (1973) emphasizes that cultural systems survive through the reproduction of shared meanings embedded in social practices; therefore, the continuity of *halaqah* reflects the preservation of a living Islamic intellectual tradition rather than educational stagnation. In this context, moderation within the Minangkabau *surau* tradition is not produced as an external ideological project but as the cumulative result of historical internalization, where knowledge, authority, ethics, and communal life interact to form an Islamic scholarly habitus that is intellectually grounded, socially adaptive, and capable of sustaining coexistence in plural societies (Hamka, 1974; Mardhiyah et al., 2026).

3.3 Construction of ABS–SBK (Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah) and the Integration of Islamic Intellectual Networks Based on Religious Moderation

Within the framework of Islamic epistemology and Bourdieu's (1977) theory of social reproduction, the Minangkabau *surau* can be understood as an epistemic institution that produces, legitimises, and reproduces religious knowledge through the integration of *adat*, *syarak*, and scholarly authority. The findings demonstrate that the *surau* does not merely function as a religious space or traditional educational institution, but operates as a knowledge system in which Islamic teachings, cultural values, and social practices are continuously negotiated within the framework of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS–SBK). In this epistemic configuration, ABS–SBK does not exist merely as a philosophical expression of Minangkabau identity, but as a structural framework that regulates the relationship between religious authority, customary practices, and collective morality (Mutaqin et al., 2025;

Nasution, 1991; Navis, 1994). Berger and Luckmann's (1966) concept of social construction explains how such values become socially meaningful through continuous processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization, in which religious and cultural principles are transformed into institutional realities and embodied social dispositions. Within this process, halaqah becomes the central mechanism through which knowledge transmission, adab formation, and religious socialization occur simultaneously, positioning the surau as an epistemic arena where moderation is produced through the integration of textual authority, local wisdom, and communal life (Azra, 2017; Nizar, 2007; Wahidin et al., 2023; Widodo et al., 2026).



Figure 3. Institutional setting of Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum, Padang City.

As presented in Figure 3, Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum, located in Lubuk Minturun Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang City, West Sumatra, represents a contemporary *pesantren* in which the *halaqah* tradition is institutionally maintained as an integral component of Islamic education. The findings indicate that the continuity of *halaqah* is supported by an educational environment that integrates the study of classical Islamic texts, pedagogical engagement between *ustaz* and *santri*, and the cultivation of religious discipline within the everyday life of the *pesantren*. This institutional setting demonstrates how the *halaqah* tradition continues to function as a medium for the transmission of Islamic scholarship and the internalization of moderation-oriented religious values through sustained educational practice.

The findings further indicate that the epistemic strength of the Minangkabau surau lies in its capacity to connect local Islamic traditions with broader transregional networks of Islamic scholarship. Azra (2013) explains that Islamic intellectual development in the Malay-Indonesian world cannot be separated from the circulation of knowledge between the archipelago and the Haramayn scholarly centers through *rihlah 'ilmiyyah*, *sanad* transmission, and networks of ulama. Within this historical

structure, the surau functioned not as an isolated local institution but as an epistemic node connecting Minangkabau society with wider Islamic intellectual traditions (Aqodiah et al., 2026; Khasanah et al., 2023). The transmission of *kitab kuning*, *talaqqi*, and the authority of *tuanku* or ulama created a mechanism through which universal Islamic knowledge was translated into local cultural realities. Fathurahman (2008) further demonstrates that the *Syattariyah* intellectual network strengthened this process by integrating textual knowledge with spiritual cultivation, producing a religious orientation that balanced intellectual discipline, ethical refinement, and social responsibility. The *surau-halaqah* system represents a dynamic epistemic structure in which global Islamic scholarship and local cultural identity interact, generating a form of religious moderation rooted in historical continuity rather than in external ideological construction (Rohman et al., 2026; Syahril et al., 2024).

Table 3. Epistemic Mechanisms in Constructing ABS-SBK and Religious Moderation

Epistemic Dimension	Empirical Manifestation in <i>Surau-Halaqah</i> Tradition	Social Construction Mechanism	Contribution to Religious Moderation
Integration of <i>Adat</i> and <i>Syarak</i>	ABS-SBK values embedded in religious learning and social practices	Transformation of cultural and religious values into shared social norms	Produces harmony between Islamic principles and local diversity
Knowledge Transmission	<i>Talaqqi</i> , <i>kitab kuning</i> study, <i>sanad</i> -based learning, and teacher-student interaction	Reproduction of Islamic scholarly authority through continuous transmission	Maintains contextual and responsible religious understanding
Local-Global Intellectual Connectivity	Networks of ulama, Haramayn scholarship, and transregional Islamic exchanges	Expansion of knowledge legitimacy beyond local boundaries	Develops openness toward intellectual diversity
Ethical-Spiritual Formation	<i>Adab</i> , collective worship, and spiritual discipline through <i>surau</i> life	Internalisation of values through repeated social practice	Cultivates humility, tolerance, and social responsibility
Contextual Interpretation	Negotiation between textual teachings and Minangkabau social reality	Reconstruction of religious meaning within cultural contexts	Prevents rigid literalism and strengthens balanced reasoning

Source: Synthesised from field findings and interpreted through Bourdieu (1977), Berger and Luckmann (1966), Azra (2013), Fathurahman (2008), Nizar (2007), and Hidayat (2011).

The analytical framework presented in Table 3 demonstrates that ABS–SBK operates as an epistemic system rather than merely a cultural slogan, because its values are continuously reproduced through institutionalized learning practices within the *surau*. Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus* explains that social values become durable dispositions when they are repeatedly enacted within a structured environment. In this regard, moderation within the Minangkabau Islamic tradition emerges through the embodied practices of the halaqah system, where *santri* and community members internalize balance, tolerance, and social responsibility through everyday religious interaction (Erawadi & Setiadi, 2024; Marzuki et al., 2025). The principle of *tasamuh* develops through communal learning spaces that accommodate differences of interpretation under scholarly guidance, while *tawazun* is produced through the ability to balance textual commitment with social realities (Giling et al., 2025; Isnaeniah et al., 2026). As Azra (2013) and Fazlur Rahman (1982) argue, Islamic reasoning requires the integration of textual understanding, practical application, and contextual reflection; therefore, the *surau* tradition fosters moderation by connecting sacred texts with lived experiences. Religious moderation in the Minangkabau context is not a recently introduced educational agenda but the result of a long historical process of epistemic internalization within the *surau–halaqah* tradition (Ramli et al., 2025; Syahputra & Rahman, 2026).

Waktu	Kitab	Hari	Uraian
Pagi	Fiqh	Subtu	Mulok
	Nahwu		PPKn
	Tauhid		Istirahat
	Mematik		IPS
Siang	Tauhid / Amleak	Abad Sabtu	MTK
	Fiqh		B. Inggris
	Ba'Vem		B. Arab
	AKhlak		Istirahat
Malam	Tafsir		B. Indonesia
	Tauhid		IPA
	Fiqh		
	Hadits		
	Usul		
	Shariat		
	Tafsir		

Figure 4. Subjects being taught at Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum, Padang City.

As shown in Figure 4, the curriculum structure at Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum Padang presents a systematic organization of halaqah learning, distributing the study of classical Islamic sciences across morning, afternoon, and evening sessions, while allocating weekends to general education subjects. The findings demonstrate that this curricular configuration preserves the centrality of *kitab kuning* through sustained

engagement with disciplines such as *fiqh*, *nahwu*, *tauhid*, *mantiq*, *imlak*, *tajwid*, *bayan*, *akhlaq*, *tafsir*, *tarikh*, *hadith*, *usul fiqh*, and *sharaf*, without excluding formal subjects required within the national education framework. Rather than reflecting a dichotomy between religious and general knowledge, this curriculum embodies an integrated educational model in which classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary academic learning are institutionally interconnected. Such integration provides the pedagogical foundation through which religious competence, intellectual development, and moderation-oriented religious understanding are cultivated simultaneously within the *halaqah* tradition.

The continuity of the Minangkabau *surau* demonstrates that traditional Islamic institutions possess the capacity to preserve epistemic identity while engaging with wider intellectual transformations (Hadi & Kurniawan, 2025; Subairi et al., 2025). Within Bourdieu's (1977) perspective, the *surau* represents an autonomous epistemic field in which legitimacy is maintained through the authority of the ulama, the continuity of the *sanad*, the preservation of *kitab kuning*, and the reproduction of *halaqah* practices. This continuity should not be interpreted as resistance to change, but as a strategy for maintaining the coherence of an Islamic knowledge system while adapting to changing social conditions (Wahidin et al., 2023; Wasim et al., 2026). The integration of ABS-SBK with transregional Islamic intellectual networks reveals that Minangkabau Islam developed through a dialectical relationship between local wisdom and global scholarship, between *adat* as social order and *syarak* as religious authority (Arbainsyah et al., 2026; Rosa et al., 2026). Thus, the *surau-halaqah* system constitutes a unique epistemic model that produces religious moderation not through formal ideological transmission, but through the continuous reproduction of knowledge, ethics, and social practices that shape a balanced, inclusive, and contextually grounded Islamic habitus.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that religious moderation within the Minangkabau *surau-halaqah-pesantren* tradition is not an externally imposed normative doctrine, but a historically rooted socio-epistemic disposition. Framed by Bourdieu's theory of habitus and Berger and Luckmann's social constructionism, the findings reveal that moderation is continuously reproduced through the integrated mechanisms of *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*, *tazkiyah*, *talaqqī*, *kitab kuning* study, and *sanad* continuity. Grounded in the *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) philosophy, the *halaqah* transforms

abstract Islamic values into embodied, culturally legitimized practices, establishing the Minangkabau tradition as an indigenous epistemic model for ethical habituation.

Theoretically, this research advances the sociology of Islamic education by shifting the analytical focus from top-down curricular interventions to bottom-up, institutionally embedded systems of knowledge reproduction. Practically, these findings offer crucial insights for educational policymakers and religious institutions: efforts to cultivate sustainable moderation should move beyond standardized, state-mandated modules and instead leverage organic, community-rooted educational traditions that hold authentic socio-scholarly authority.

Despite its contributions, this study is limited by its qualitative focus on five specific sites within West Sumatra. Future research should undertake comparative analyses with other traditional Islamic educational systems, such as Javanese *pesantren* or South Kalimantan *majelis taklim*, and examine how the traditional *halaqah* framework adapts to digital transformation and contemporary ideological shifts.

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