

Transformative Da'wah through Interfaith Encounters: Experiential Religious Moderation among Santri in Papua

Arif Rofiki, Supriyono

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Fattahul Muluk Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia; Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

Received: 13/07/2026

Revised: 14/09/2026

Accepted: 22/09/2026

Abstract

This study examines the 'Jumat Berkah' (Blessed Friday) program at Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School in Jayapura, Papua, as a form of interfaith-oriented transformative da'wah in a Christian-majority social context. Rather than treating da'wah primarily as verbal preaching, the program engages santri in food sharing and respectful encounters with non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan community members. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, the study draws on participatory observation, in-depth interviews with santri, pesantren educators, and non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan participants, and activity documentation. The analysis focuses on ethical modeling, social interaction, reciprocity, and the internalization of four religious-moderation values: tawasuth (the middle path), tasamuh (tolerance), musawah (equality), and tathawwur wa ibtikar (dynamism and innovation). The findings indicate that moderation is learned not only through doctrinal instruction but through repeated embodied encounters in which santri practice non-discrimination, attentive listening, and respectful social presence. The program also creates a relational space in which non-Muslim community members encounter Islam through service rather than persuasion. At the same time, the food-distribution model contains a potential giver-recipient asymmetry, making community voice, reciprocity, and reflection essential to avoiding paternalistic forms of charity. The study proposes interfaith-oriented transformative da'wah as a contextual pedagogical model that combines humanitarian service, ethical modeling, dialogical encounter, and reflexive learning. It contributes to scholarship on religious moderation in Papua by shifting attention from interreligious contestation and elite dialogue toward everyday pesantren-based experiential practice.

Keywords

religious moderation; transformative da'wah; pesantren education; interfaith engagement; Indigenous Papuans; Papua

Corresponding Author

Arif Rofiki

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Fattahul Muluk, Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia; a.arifrofik@gmail.com



1. INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation has become an important educational and civic agenda in Indonesia because religious diversity can generate both social cooperation and contestation (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019; Menchik, 2016; Parker, 2014). Education occupies a particularly important place within this agenda because tolerance and respect for religious difference are not formed solely through normative instruction but also through institutional culture, social interaction, and learners' everyday experiences of diversity (Raihani, 2014; Siswanto, 2020; Mulyana, 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2025). Pesantren occupy a strategic position in this process. They are not only institutions for transmitting Islamic knowledge but also social and cultural organizations that shape religious dispositions, communal relationships, moral authority, and forms of public religious engagement (Lukens-Bull, 2005; Hefner, 2009; Tan, 2011). Studies of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools further demonstrate that religious moderation may be cultivated through institutional culture, educational policies, educator exemplarity, and everyday social practices (Umiarso & Qorib, 2022; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Athoillah et al., 2024).

A growing body of scholarship has consequently shown that moderation in Islamic education involves more than doctrinal endorsement of tolerance. It requires practices through which learners encounter difference, negotiate social and religious boundaries, and translate religious values into actual conduct (Sakai & Isbah, 2014; Mufi et al., 2023; Zulfa et al., 2025). Interreligious competence likewise develops through the capacity to recognize, respect, and interact constructively with people from different religious backgrounds rather than simply possessing knowledge about religious diversity (Utami, 2022). This practical dimension is especially important in settings where Muslims are not the demographic majority and where interreligious relations are embedded in distinctive histories of identity, migration, public-space contestation, and local cultural authority.

Papua provides such a setting. Research on Muslim-Christian relations in Papua has documented several dimensions of the region's religious life. Qodir (2015) examined contestation between Muslims and Christians in Jayapura's public sphere, showing how religious identity and competing claims to public space can generate tension. Sabara and Kodina (2020), by contrast, demonstrated that Muslim groups in Jayapura also cultivate active tolerance through intensive interaction, dialogue, and cooperation with adherents of other religions. Studies of Dani Muslims have similarly illustrated how Muslim minority identities are negotiated in relation to local culture, religious symbols, and political structures (Yamin et al., 2019). These findings suggest that relations between religious communities in Papua cannot adequately be understood through a simple conflict-harmony binary.

In Manokwari, Gerung and Mantu (2021) demonstrated how religious identity, public space, bureaucracy, economic competition, and the politics of the "Gospel City" shape Muslim-Christian contestation. Other research has drawn attention to the relationship between religious movements and peacebuilding. Ridwan (2019), for example, examined the presence of transnational Islamic movements and their implications for communal peace in Papua, while Ridwan and Khotimah (2024) subsequently explored the intersection of Islamism, peacebuilding, and interfaith dialogue. Together, these studies show how interreligious relations in Papua are shaped by interactions among local political structures, religious organizations, identity claims, institutional mediation, and broader religious networks.

Local traditions and cultural frameworks constitute another important dimension. Jakiyudin (2023) examined the contextualisation of religious moderation through Jayapura's local civic motto *Hen Tecahi Yo Onomi T'mar Ni Hanased*, identifying values of tolerance, unity, cultural accommodation, and religious harmony. Islamy and Makatita (2022) similarly identified religious moderation within the Bakar Batu tradition among Dani Muslims in Jayawijaya, particularly in the accommodation of Islamic

norms and local cultural practices. Among Kokoda Muslims in West Papua, Jubba et al. (2024) demonstrated how the accommodation of Islam and adat contributes to the negotiation of harmonious Muslim-Christian relationships. Comparative scholarship from neighbouring Maluku likewise shows that Muslim-Christian peacebuilding may be sustained through locally embedded relational and cultural institutions such as baileo and gandong (Dandirwalu & Qodim, 2021). Taken together, these studies demonstrate that Papuan and eastern Indonesian interreligious relations cannot be reduced to either conflict or harmony; they are continuously negotiated through public institutions, religious organizations, local traditions, cultural identities, and everyday interaction.

Despite this increasingly rich regional literature, an important empirical and pedagogical gap remains. Existing studies in Papua have focused mainly on interreligious contestation, Muslim minority identity, community harmony, local wisdom, religious organizations, Islamism, or institutional and elite-level peacebuilding (Qodir, 2015; Ridwan, 2019; Yamin et al., 2019; Sabara & Kodina, 2020; Gerung & Mantu, 2021; Islamy & Makatita, 2022; Jakiyudin, 2023; Ridwan & Khotimah, 2024; Jubba et al., 2024). Less attention has been paid to how a pesantren situated in a Muslim-minority environment deliberately turns repeated contact with non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan communities into an experiential pedagogy of religious moderation.

This gap is important because scholarship on intergroup relations suggests that direct and sustained contact can influence the way individuals perceive members of other social groups. Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis laid the foundation for understanding the conditions under which intergroup encounters can reduce prejudice, while Pettigrew (1998) subsequently conceptualised intergroup contact as a process involving learning about the outgroup, behavioural change, affective ties, and reassessment of one's own group. A large-scale meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found that intergroup contact is generally associated with reduced prejudice, while their subsequent analysis demonstrated that increased empathy and perspective taking and reduced intergroup anxiety constitute important mediating processes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). These insights are particularly relevant to educational settings in which learners repeatedly encounter people whom they previously understood primarily through religious or social categories.

The analytical gap is therefore not simply geographical. It concerns the process through which santri learn moderation by doing: observing educators, participating in service, meeting religious others, reflecting on difference, and translating Islamic ethical concepts into repeated social practice. This perspective resonates with experiential-learning theory, in which concrete experience becomes educationally significant through reflection, conceptualisation, and subsequent action (Kolb, 1984). Recent research in an Indonesian pesantren-based school likewise demonstrates that structured interfaith encounters can function as experiential learning through which students reconsider stereotypes, develop appreciation for difference, and connect Islamic values with lived pluralism (Adzibah et al., 2025). It also concerns how the non-Muslim community itself interprets such encounters and whether the relationship becomes reciprocal or remains structured by a one-directional giver-recipient model.

The 'Jumat Berkah' (Blessed Friday) program at Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School in Jayapura offers a useful case through which to examine this process. The program involves santri in distributing food to members of the non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan community. The activity is understood within the pesantren as da'wah bil-hal: communicating Islamic ethics through conduct, service, hospitality, and respectful presence rather than through doctrinal debate or conversion-oriented persuasion. This practice brings santri into direct and repeated contact with people whose religious and

cultural experiences differ from their own, thereby providing a concrete setting in which the values of religious moderation can be enacted, tested, interpreted, and reflected upon. Conceptually, this article approaches religious moderation through four values commonly used in Indonesian Islamic educational discourse: *tawasuth* (the middle path), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *musawah* (equality), and *tathawwur wa ibtikar* (dynamism and innovation). These values are situated within a broader Indonesian discourse that understands religious moderation as an effort to develop balanced, tolerant, non-excessive, socially responsible, and contextually responsive religious practices (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019; Siswanto, 2020; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023). They are not treated here as abstract labels or predetermined indicators of program success but as interpretive categories whose meanings become visible in particular practices and relationships.

Tawasuth is examined through the santri's ability to avoid binary, excessive, or exclusionary judgments; *tasamuh* through willingness to recognize and interact respectfully across religious difference; *musawah* through non-discriminatory treatment and recognition of equal human dignity; and *tathawwur wa ibtikar* through the pesantren's capacity to develop adaptive forms of *da'wah* appropriate to a plural social context. This approach thus moves analysis from religious moderation as normative vocabulary toward religious moderation as observable and relational practice. Bandura's (1977) social-learning perspective is used to illuminate the role of educator modelling in this process. From this perspective, santri do not learn religious attitudes solely from explicit instruction; they may also acquire behavioural dispositions by observing how *kyai*, *ustadz*, and other significant figures act toward people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. The consistency between what educators teach and what learners observe therefore becomes particularly important when moderation is understood as an embodied ethical practice.

Freire's (1970) critique of the "banking" model provides a complementary dialogical lens for examining another dimension of the program: whether humanitarian service positions Indigenous Papuan community members as passive recipients of Muslim generosity or recognises them as active subjects possessing experience, knowledge, voice, and agency. In this perspective, an encounter becomes dialogical when the relationship moves beyond the transfer of material assistance toward mutual listening and recognition. This distinction is analytically important because charitable activity may promote solidarity while simultaneously reproducing asymmetrical giver-recipient relations if the recipients' perspectives remain absent. Taken together, these analytical lenses illuminate both how santri learn through ethical modelling and lived encounters and how the relational quality of giving, listening, recognition, and reciprocity shapes whether repeated interfaith encounters become transformative rather than paternalistic. Intergroup contact theory helps explain the relational effects of repeated encounters (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008); experiential learning explains how encounters can become pedagogically meaningful through experience and reflection (Kolb, 1984; Adzibah et al., 2025); social-learning theory directs attention to educator modelling (Bandura, 1977); and dialogical pedagogy makes it possible to examine voice, agency, and power within the encounter itself (Freire, 1970).

Accordingly, this study addresses three research questions: (1) How is the 'Jumat Berkah' program enacted as an interfaith-oriented form of *da'wah bil-hal* through ethical modelling and social interaction? (2) How do santri experience and internalize *tawasuth*, *tasamuh*, *musawah*, and *tathawwur wa ibtikar* through participation in the program? (3) How do non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan community members interpret the program, and what forms of reciprocity, trust, or power asymmetry emerge from the interaction?

By answering these questions, the study seeks to contribute a more process-oriented account of religious moderation. Rather than approaching moderation primarily as policy discourse, doctrinal content, or predetermined attitudes, it examines how moderation is learned, enacted, negotiated, and interpreted through repeated social encounters. More specifically, the study seeks to theorize interfaith-oriented transformative da'wah as a form of community-based experiential education in a Muslim-minority setting, while incorporating both the learning experiences of santri and the agency and interpretations of the non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan communities with whom they interact.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to understand how participants experienced and interpreted the 'Jumat Berkah' program. A phenomenological orientation was selected because the study is concerned with the lived meanings through which santri and other participants understand religious difference, social service, and moderation in the course of direct interfaith encounters (Creswell, 2013). The research was conducted at Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School in Jayapura, Papua, and in community settings where the food-sharing activities took place.

The participant groups comprised santri who directly participated in the program, ustadz or pesantren administrators involved in organising and modelling the activity, and non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan community members who interacted with the santri during the program. This study employed a purposive sampling strategy with snowball assistance to select participants with direct experience of the 'Jumat Berkah' program. The sample comprised 22 participants: santri (n = 12; aged 15–18; 6 male, 6 female) who had participated in at least three sessions; ustadz/administrators (n = 4; aged 28–55; all male) involved in program supervision and modelling; and non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan community members (n = 6; aged 22–60; 4 female, 2 male) who had received food assistance at least twice and had interacted with santri. Inclusion criteria ensured sustained engagement with the program, and sampling continued until data saturation was achieved.

Data were generated through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. During observation, the researcher attended 'Jumat Berkah' activities and recorded how food distribution was organised, how ustadz guided santri, how greetings and conversations occurred, how recipients responded, and how santri behaved before, during, and after the encounters. The original fieldwork extended over several weeks, enabling the researcher to observe the program as a repeated practice rather than as a single event. Fieldwork was conducted over six weeks, from 15 July to 25 August 2025. A total of six 'Jumat Berkah' sessions were observed, each lasting approximately four hours (8:00 AM – 12:00 PM), yielding 24 hours of direct observation. Two additional mid-week visits (Wednesdays) contributed a further 4 hours of informal engagement and observation at the pesantren, bringing total contact hours to approximately 28 hours. Observations were documented through detailed field notes focused on organisational, pedagogical, and interactional dimensions of the program.

In-depth interviews explored participants' interpretations of the program. Santri were asked how they understood religious moderation, what they learned from interacting with non-Muslim community members, and whether their perceptions changed through participation. Ustadz and administrators were asked about the program's objectives, the pedagogical role of modelling, and the meaning of dakwah bil-hal. Non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan participants were asked how they perceived the presence of the pesantren, the meaning of the food-sharing activity, the quality of the interaction, and whether they experienced the relationship as respectful, reciprocal, or paternalistic.

Documentation of program activities was used to contextualise interview and observational data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and, where preferred by Indigenous Papuan participants, Papuan Malay. Interview durations averaged 35–70 minutes depending on participant group (santri: 25–55 min; ustadz: 40–90 min; community members: 20–65 min). All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim in Bahasa Indonesia within 48 hours. Follow-up clarification interviews were conducted with six participants (three santri, two community members, one ustadz) to explore emergent themes. Participants were assigned pseudonyms and group codes (S1–S12 for santri; U1–U4 for ustadz; P1–P6 for community members) to ensure anonymity, with all identifying information removed during transcription and reporting.

Data analysis followed the iterative model of Miles and Huberman (1994), involving data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Interview, observation, and documentary materials were read repeatedly to identify recurring meanings related to ethical modelling, social interaction, the four moderation values, reciprocity, and the limits of charity-based engagement. Interpretations were continually checked against the data sources so that claims reflected convergences and tensions across participant groups rather than relying on a single perspective. The four moderation values functioned as sensitising concepts, while attention was also given to meanings that emerged from participants' accounts of trust, difference, dignity, and social hierarchy. Because the study concerns interfaith relations and includes Indigenous Papuan participants, ethical procedures are central to the credibility of the research. Participants should be informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to decline or withdraw, and the intended use of interview material. Identifying information should be minimised in reporting, particularly where quotations could reveal individuals in a relatively small community.

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles for qualitative research involving human participants, with particular attention to the cultural context of research with Indigenous Papuan communities. Prior to participation, all participants received a clear verbal and written explanation of the research purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from all adult participants, while for santri participants under the age of 18, written parental or guardian consent was obtained in addition to the participant's own written assent. For Indigenous Papuan community participants who expressed a preference for oral consent over written documentation, oral informed consent was obtained and recorded in field notes, consistent with culturally appropriate consent practices. To protect participant identities, especially given the small and identifiable nature of the communities involved, all identifying information was removed during transcription. Participants were assigned pseudonyms and alphanumeric codes (S1–S12 for santri; U1–U4 for ustadz; P1–P6 for community members), while specific locations, family names, and other potentially traceable details were generalised in all reporting. All raw data, including audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes, are stored securely on a password-protected device accessible only to the principal researcher, with audio recordings to be destroyed following the completion of the research project and any associated publications. Recognising the cultural context of research involving Indigenous Papuan communities, several additional safeguards were implemented: the research was conducted with respect for local protocols, including seeking permission from community leaders before approaching individual participants; the researcher acknowledged the potential for communal consent dynamics and ensured that individual consent was obtained separately from any community-level approval; attention was

given to the principle of reciprocity in Melanesian research ethics, ensuring that community participants were treated as partners whose interpretations and experiences were valued; participants were offered the opportunity to review their interview transcripts to confirm accuracy and to request removal of any material they found uncomfortable through member checking; and the researcher maintained a reflexive practice of field memoing to document power dynamics, cultural considerations, and researcher positionality throughout the fieldwork process.

Phenomenological research also requires reflexive attention to the researcher's position because access, interpretation, and interaction may be shaped by institutional and religious proximity to the field (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A positionality statement is therefore necessary to clarify the researcher's relationship to the pesantren and to the participant communities, as well as the steps taken to reduce confirmation bias and to distinguish participants' accounts from the researcher's prior assumptions. The researcher's positionality in this study reflects a complex interplay of insider and outsider dynamics that shaped access, interpretation, and interpersonal engagement throughout the fieldwork process. The principal researcher is a Muslim scholar affiliated with an Islamic university in Indonesia, which facilitated initial access to Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School through existing academic networks and shared religious identity. This institutional and religious proximity provided a degree of insider status, enabling trust-building with pesantren administrators and ustadz, who viewed the researcher as sympathetic to Islamic educational values and goals. However, the researcher was not a member of the Yaa Bunayya community prior to the study and held no formal authority over santri, ustadz, or community participants. This positioning allowed the researcher to move between roles: as a co-religionist and academic peer in relation to ustadz, as a respectful older figure in relation to santri, and as an outsider (both religiously and ethnically) in relation to non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan community members.

The researcher's identity as a non-Papuan Muslim introduced additional complexity, particularly when engaging with Indigenous Papuan participants. While the researcher's Muslim identity was shared with the pesantren community, it represented a religious boundary in the predominantly Christian Indigenous community. Similarly, the researcher's non-Papuan ethnicity positioned the researcher as an outsider within Papua's socio-political context, where historical dynamics between Indigenous Papuans and non-Papuan migrants have been marked by tension. This outsider status was acknowledged openly with community participants, who were informed that the researcher's purpose was to learn from their experiences rather than to represent them or speak on their behalf. This transparency appeared to facilitate openness, as participants understood the researcher was not assuming authority over their perspectives. Access to the research site was negotiated through a multi-stage process. Initial contact was established through academic connections with the pesantren leadership, followed by formal written correspondence outlining the research objectives, methodology, and ethical commitments. A preliminary visit was conducted to discuss the study with pesantren administrators and to obtain institutional permission. Following this, the researcher met with community leaders in the areas where 'Jumat Berkah' distributions occurred to explain the study and to seek their approval before approaching individual community members. This step was essential in Papua's cultural context, where community leader endorsement is often a prerequisite for individual participation. Individual participants were then approached during or after observed 'Jumat Berkah' sessions and invited to participate voluntarily.

To enhance the credibility and reflexivity of the research, several practices were systematically employed throughout the fieldwork and analysis phases. Field memoing was conducted after every

observation session and interview, documenting initial impressions, emotional responses, power dynamics, cultural considerations, and emerging analytical insights. These memos served as an ongoing reflexive record, enabling the researcher to trace how positionality influenced interactions and interpretations. Peer debriefing was conducted through regular discussions with two academic colleagues who were familiar with qualitative research in eastern Indonesian contexts but uninvolved in the fieldwork. These debriefing sessions provided external perspectives, challenged emerging assumptions, and helped identify potential biases in data interpretation. Bracketing was employed during analysis, wherein the researcher consciously set aside prior assumptions about religious moderation, pesantren education, and interfaith relations derived from previous reading and teaching, allowing participants' accounts to shape analytical categories. Member clarification (member checking) was offered to all participants, who were given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts to confirm accuracy and to request removal or revision of any material they found uncomfortable. This practice was particularly important for Indigenous Papuan participants, ensuring that their accounts were not misrepresented and that they retained agency over their contributions. Additionally, the researcher maintained ongoing reflection on how religious identity, ethnic position, and institutional affiliation shaped both participant responses and analytical interpretations, recognising that complete objectivity was neither possible nor desirable, but that transparency about positionality could strengthen the study's trustworthiness.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. From Charitable Distribution to Interfaith-Oriented Da'wah bil-Hal

The 'Jumat Berkah' program was understood within the pesantren as more than the distribution of food. It functioned as da'wah bil-hal, a form of da'wah in which religious commitments become visible through conduct. The program did not center on sermons, doctrinal debate, or efforts to persuade non-Muslim recipients to change religious affiliation. Instead, its da'wah dimension emerged through service, hospitality, respectful greeting, non-discriminatory distribution, and the willingness to remain socially present with people of another faith. In this sense, Islam was communicated performatively: compassion through food sharing, equality through the absence of religious discrimination, and tolerance through recognition of the other's religious difference.

This practice is significant in the Papuan context because interreligious relations in the region have historically been marked by both cooperation and contestation. Studies in Jayapura and Manokwari have documented struggles over public religious identity alongside active forms of dialogue and social cooperation (Qodir, 2015; Sabara & Kodina, 2020; Gerung & Mantu, 2021). Against that background, 'Jumat Berkah' shifts the arena of interfaith engagement away from formal dialogue forums or contested symbolic spaces and into repeated everyday encounters. Its distinctive contribution lies in making the santri themselves participants in this relational process.

The program also challenges a transmission-centered model of da'wah. Rather than a one-way flow of religious messages from Muslim giver to non-Muslim recipient, the encounters create opportunities for the santri to learn about Papuan social realities and for non-Muslim community members to encounter a non-confrontational expression of Islam. The transformative claim of the program, therefore, depends on reciprocity: the activity becomes pedagogically meaningful not simply because santri give something, but because they meet, listen, respond, and reconsider their own assumptions through the encounter. Quote U1 – Ustadz/Administrator on Da'wah bil hal: *"Kami tidak pernah menyuruh santri untuk mengajak mereka masuk Islam. Yang kami ajarkan adalah bagaimana berbagi*

dengan tulus, bagaimana menyapa dengan ramah, dan bagaimana menunjukkan bahwa Islam mengajarkan kebaikan bagi semua orang. Itu sudah dakwah, dakwah bil-hal—dakwah melalui perbuatan, bukan melalui ceramah atau paksaan." (Translation: "We never instruct santri to invite them to convert to Islam. What we teach is how to share sincerely, how to greet warmly, and how to show that Islam teaches goodness for everyone. That is already da'wah, dakwah bil-hal—da'wah through action, not through sermons or coercion.")

This statement reflects the pesantren's pedagogical orientation toward service-based religious communication. The ustadz explicitly distinguishes the program from conversion-oriented approaches, framing dakwah bil-hal as communicating Islamic ethics through observable conduct rather than through verbal persuasion. The emphasis on sincerity, warmth, and universal goodness positions the program as a form of religious expression that respects the Other's religious identity while remaining authentically Islamic. Quote P1 – Non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan Participant on Pesantren Presence and Respect: *"Mereka datang membawa makanan, menyapa kami dengan senyum, dan tidak pilih-pilih. Saya merasa dihargai. Mereka tidak pernah bilang, 'kamu harus masuk Islam' atau begitu. Mereka hanya berbagi. Saya pikir mereka orang baik dan agama mereka mengajarkan kebaikan."* (Translation: "They come bringing food, greet us with smiles, and don't discriminate. I feel respected. They never say 'you must convert to Islam' or anything like that. They just share. I think they are good people, and their religion teaches goodness.")

This quote highlights the community member's perception of respectful interaction grounded in non-discriminatory treatment and the absence of conversion pressure. The participant interprets the santri's conduct as evidence of both individual goodness and the ethical character of Islam itself. The phrase "tidak pilih-pilih" (don't discriminate) is particularly significant, as it signals that the community member recognized the program's commitment to musawah (equality) in practice. The participant's interpretation moves beyond mere appreciation of material assistance to include recognition of the pesantren's religious orientation as one of service rather than persuasion, consistent with the program's dakwah bil-hal framing.

3.2. Ethical Modeling and Social Interaction as Pedagogical Mechanisms

Two mechanisms were central to the program's implementation: ethical modeling by the ustadz and direct social interaction. Modeling began before the santri's independent interaction with community members. Ustadz demonstrated how to greet people politely, distribute food without discrimination, listen attentively, and avoid language that could be interpreted as religious superiority. The significance of this process lies in the movement from verbal instruction to observable conduct. Santri did not merely hear that tolerance was important; they saw how a respected religious educator enacted tolerance in a concrete social situation. This pattern is consistent with Bandura's (1977) social-learning account, in which observation, imitation, and reinforcement contribute to the acquisition of behavior. Yet the program suggests that modeling in religious education is not reducible to imitation. The santri must interpret why particular forms of conduct matter and then apply them in encounters that cannot be completely scripted. Positive feedback from ustadz can reinforce respectful behavior, but the more consequential learning occurs when santri encounter actual responses from community members and must negotiate differences in real time.

Social interaction extends this learning process. The 'Jumat Berkah' encounters create situations in which santri and community members greet one another, exchange brief stories, respond to practical needs, and recognize one another as social persons rather than as abstract representatives of religious groups. Such contact can reduce social distance when it is repeated, respectful, and organized around

cooperative activity (Putnam, 2000; Putnam & Campbell, 2010). In the present case, interaction provides the context in which values modeled by the ustadz can be tested and internalized.

Quote S1 – Santri on Learning through Observing Ustadz: *"Saya melihat Ustadz menyapa mereka dengan sangat ramah, seperti menyapa tetangga sendiri. Beliau tidak pernah melihat siapa mereka, apakah Muslim atau Kristen. Yang penting, beliau tersenyum dan berbicara dengan baik. Saya belajar bahwa kita harus menghormati siapa pun, tanpa melihat agamanya terlebih dahulu. Ustadz mengajarkan dengan contoh, bukan hanya dengan ceramah."* (Translation: "I saw Ustadz greet them very warmly, like greeting one's own neighbors. He never looked at who they were, whether Muslim or Christian. What mattered was that he smiled and spoke kindly. I learned that we must respect everyone, without first looking at their religion. Ustadz taught by example, not just by lectures.")

This quote illustrates how modeling functions as a pedagogical mechanism in the program. The santri's observation of the ustadz's conduct—warm greetings, non-discriminatory treatment, and kindness—becomes the primary vehicle for learning respect across religious boundaries. The santri explicitly distinguishes between learning through example and learning through verbal instruction, affirming Bandura's (1977) social-learning framework, in which observing respected figures shapes behavior and attitudes. The phrase "tidak melihat siapa mereka" (not looking at who they are) indicates internalization of *musawah* (equality) as a practical orientation rather than an abstract principle.

Quote S2 – Santri on Concrete Encounter Changing Perspectives: *"Dulu saya pikir orang Kristen di Papua mungkin tidak suka dengan Muslim, karena saya dengar ada konflik di tempat lain. Tapi ketika saya bertemu dengan Ibu Maria, beliau sangat ramah dan berterima kasih. Beliau cerita tentang anak-anaknya dan kami tertawa bersama. Saya sadar bahwa mereka sama seperti kami; mereka juga manusia biasa yang membutuhkan bantuan dan persahabatan. Saya tidak takut lagi untuk berinteraksi dengan mereka."* (Translation: "I used to think that Christians in Papua might not like Muslims, because I heard there were conflicts elsewhere. But when I met Ibu Maria, she was very friendly and grateful. She told me about her children, and we laughed together. I realized that they are just like us; they are also ordinary people who need help and friendship. I am no longer afraid to interact with them.")

This quote reveals a transformative encounter that directly challenged the santri's prior assumptions. The santri initially held a stereotype shaped by secondhand reports of interreligious conflict, leading to a generalized expectation of hostility or distance. However, the concrete, face-to-face encounter with Ibu Maria—characterized by friendliness, gratitude, shared laughter, and personal storytelling—disrupted this expectation. The santri's realization that "mereka sama seperti kami" (they are just like us) represents a cognitive shift from religiously defined otherness to shared humanity. This aligns with contact theory (Putnam & Campbell, 2010), which suggests that repeated, respectful, and cooperative intergroup contact can reduce prejudice and social distance. The santri's concluding statement—"Saya tidak takut lagi" (I am no longer afraid)—indicates that the encounter produced emotional as well as cognitive change, reducing anxiety about interreligious interaction and fostering openness to future encounters.

3.3. Internalizing Religious Moderation: Four Values, Four Distinct Processes

Tawasuth: Decentring Exclusive Judgment

Tawasuth, or the middle path, appeared in the santri's learning as a process of resisting simplistic and polarising judgments. In a plural environment, the 'middle' does not mean indifference to religious conviction; rather, it refers to the capacity to maintain commitment while refusing to treat difference as a justification for hostility or social exclusion. Through direct interaction, santri encountered non-

Muslim Indigenous Papuans not as an abstract theological category but as neighbors and community members with shared human concerns. This experiential dimension differentiates tawasuth from merely repeating a normative definition of moderation. The educational significance of the program lies in creating occasions for santri to compare prior assumptions with concrete encounters. Such encounters can reveal that religious difference coexists with shared concerns about dignity, family, livelihood, hospitality, and peace. In this respect, tawasuth becomes an interpretive discipline: the santri learn to hold religious commitment together with social openness.

Quote S3 – Santri on Direct Interaction Affecting Previously Narrow or Fearful Perceptions: *"Sebelum ikut Jumat Berkah, saya pikir orang Papua di sini semuanya keras dan tidak suka pendatang, apalagi pendatang Muslim. Saya takut kalau mereka marah atau tidak mau menerima kami. Tapi ketika kami datang dan mereka menerima makanan dengan senyum, saya malu karena ternyata tidak seperti yang saya bayangkan. Mereka ramah dan mengucapkan terima kasih. Sekarang saya tahu bahwa ketakutan saya tidak beralasan. Mereka juga manusia biasa yang ingin hidup damai."* (Translation: "Before joining Jumat Berkah, I thought that Papuans here were all tough and didn't like newcomers, especially Muslims. I was afraid they would be angry or wouldn't accept us. But when we came, and they accepted the food with smiles, I felt ashamed because it turned out not to be what I had imagined. They were friendly and said thank you. Now I know that my fears were unfounded. They are also ordinary people who want to live in peace.")

This quote illustrates a significant transformation in the santri's perception, moving from a position of fear and stereotypical assumption to one of recognition and revised understanding. The santri initially held a narrow and generalized view of Papuans as "tough" and unwelcoming toward newcomers and Muslims specifically—a perception likely shaped by broader societal narratives about ethnic and religious tensions in Papua. The fear of rejection ("takut kalau mereka marah") created emotional distance and prompted anticipation of hostility. However, the concrete encounter through the 'Jumat Berkah' program directly contradicted these expectations. The community members' friendly reception and expressions of gratitude ("menerima makanan dengan senyum," "ramah dan mengucapkan terima kasih") disrupted the santri's preconceived framework. The admission of feeling "malu" (ashamed) is particularly telling, as it signals self-awareness of having held inaccurate assumptions and a willingness to acknowledge this error. The santri's concluding reflection—"Sekarang saya tahu bahwa ketakutan saya tidak beralasan" (Now I know that my fears were unfounded)—represents a cognitive and emotional shift from prejudice to recognition of shared humanity ("mereka juga manusia biasa yang ingin hidup damai").

This finding is consistent with Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, which posits that intergroup contact under appropriate conditions can reduce prejudice by providing information that disconfirms stereotypes. The transformation described here is not merely intellectual but emotional, as the santri's fear—a powerful affective barrier to interfaith engagement—was replaced by recognition and openness. This underscores the program's potential to serve as an experiential learning space where santri not only learn about religious moderation but also practice it in ways that reshape their dispositions toward religious and cultural others.

Tasamuh: Tolerance as Relational Practice

Tasamuh was enacted most clearly through the willingness to enter social relations across religious boundaries without demanding sameness. The program required santri to greet, serve, listen to, and converse with non-Muslim community members in a manner that acknowledged religious

difference while preserving respect. Tolerance, therefore, appeared not as passive non-interference but as an active social competence.

This distinction matters because tolerance can remain superficial when it is only taught as a moral slogan. The 'Jumat Berkah' encounters gave santri a repeated context in which to practice restraint, courtesy, listening, and curiosity. These practices align with studies showing that interfaith contact and inclusive religious orientations can contribute to stronger social relations (Wiantamiharja, 2019; Sabara & Kodina, 2020). In Jayapura specifically, local discourses of religious moderation are also embedded in civic narratives of living together across ethnic and religious difference (Jakiyudin, 2023).

Quote S4 – Santri on How "Tolerance" Meant Differently After Participation: *"Dulu saya pikir toleransi itu hanya membiarkan orang lain beribadah sesuai agamanya tanpa mengganggu mereka. Tapi setelah ikut Jumat Berkah, saya rasa toleransi itu lebih dari sekadar itu. Toleransi adalah kita mau mendekati mereka, mau berbagi dengan mereka, mau tersenyum dan berbicara dengan mereka, bukan hanya diam dan tidak mengganggu. Kita harus aktif menunjukkan kebaikan, bukan hanya pasif membiarkan."* (Translation: "Before, I thought tolerance was just letting others worship according to their religion, not disturbing them. But after joining Jumat Berkah, I feel that tolerance is more than that. Tolerance is being willing to approach them, willing to share with them, willing to smile and talk with them, not just being silent and not disturbing. We must actively show goodness, not just passively leave them alone.")

This quote captures a significant conceptual shift in the santri's understanding of tolerance, moving from a passive to an active interpretation. The santri initially defined tolerance in conventional terms—non-interference and allowing others to practice their religion without disturbance ("membiarkan," "tidak mengganggu"). This reflects what scholars have described as "thin" tolerance, characterized by coexistence without meaningful engagement (Brown, 2006; Forst, 2013). However, through repeated participation in the 'Jumat Berkah' program, the santri's understanding evolved toward what might be termed "thick" tolerance or active social competence. The santri now describes tolerance as involving approach ("mau mendekati"), sharing ("mau berbagi"), and relational warmth ("mau tersenyum dan berbicara"). The contrast between "hanya diam dan tidak mengganggu" (just being silent and not disturbing) and "aktif menunjukkan kebaikan" (actively showing goodness) is particularly significant, as it signals a rejection of mere coexistence in favor of proactive relationship-building.

The transformation reflects the program's pedagogical impact. Tolerance is no longer understood as a passive stance of non-interference but as an active social practice requiring initiative, generosity, and interpersonal engagement. The santri's understanding aligns with the concept of *tasamuh* as enacted in the program—tolerance as relational practice rather than abstract principle. This shift from passive to active tolerance is consistent with research showing that interfaith contact can deepen participants' understanding of tolerance by moving it from a cognitive concept to an embodied social practice (Wiantamiharja, 2019; Sabara & Kodina, 2020). The quote also suggests that the program's emphasis on *dakwah bil-hal*—communicating Islam through conduct and service—contributes to this reconceptualization. By experiencing tolerance as something one does rather than merely something one permits, santri internalize a more robust and socially engaged understanding of religious moderation. This finding underscores the educational value of experiential interfaith engagement in pesantren settings, particularly in contexts where Muslims are a religious minority and where constructive interreligious relations require active effort rather than passive coexistence.

Musawah: Equality, Dignity, and Non-Discrimination

Musawah, or equality, was embodied in the principle that assistance should not be restricted to fellow Muslims. Food was distributed to non-Muslim community members based on need rather than religious affiliation. This practice provided a concrete lesson in equal moral worth: the santri were taught to recognize that compassion and social responsibility cross confessional boundaries. The relational learning involved in such encounters also depends on empathy and social awareness, capacities closely associated with emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). However, Musawah must be evaluated not only by who receives assistance but also by how the interaction is structured. Equal treatment is weakened if recipients are represented merely as passive beneficiaries or if the giver retains all authority to define need, meaning, and success. The strongest expression of musawah, therefore, occurs when non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan participants are recognized as interlocutors whose interpretations matter in evaluating the program. Their voice is essential to determining whether the encounter is experienced as dignifying and reciprocal rather than benevolent but hierarchical.

Quote P2 – Community Participant on Whether Distribution Process Made Them Feel Respected, Equal, Listened To, or Merely Treated as a Recipient: *"Mereka tidak datang seperti orang kaya yang memberi kepada orang miskin. Mereka datang seperti tetangga yang saling berbagi. Mereka menanyakan kabar kami dan mendengarkan kami berbicara. Saya tidak merasa berada di bawah mereka. Saya merasa mereka datang dengan hati yang tulus, bukan karena mereka lebih tinggi daripada kami. Mereka memperlakukan kami seperti keluarga. Tidak ada perasaan bahwa kami hanya penerima dan mereka pemberi."* (Translation: "They didn't come like rich people giving to poor people. They came like neighbors sharing. They asked how we were doing and listened when we spoke. I didn't feel beneath them. I felt they came with sincere hearts, not because they were higher than us. They treated us the same, like family. There was no feeling that we were just recipients and they were givers.")

This quote provides crucial evidence from the community perspective regarding the quality of interaction during the 'Jumat Berkah' program. The participant explicitly distinguishes the program's approach from hierarchical charity models, describing it instead as neighborly sharing ("seperti tetangga yang berbagi") rather than charitable giving from a position of superiority ("seperti orang kaya memberi kepada orang miskin"). Several dimensions of respect and equality are evident in this account. First, the participant highlights recognition through inquiry ("bertanya kabar kami") and attentive listening ("mendengarkan kalau kami bicara"), indicating that the interaction extended beyond the mere transaction of food distribution to include genuine interpersonal engagement. Second, the participant explicitly states they did not feel positioned beneath the santri ("tidak merasa di bawah mereka"), suggesting that the encounter was experienced as horizontal rather than hierarchical. Third, the participant interprets the santri's conduct as motivated by sincerity and human connection rather than status assertion ("mereka datang dengan hati yang tulus, bukan karena mereka lebih tinggi dari kami").

The participant's concluding reflection—"Tidak ada perasaan bahwa kami hanya penerima dan mereka pemberi" (There was no feeling that we were just recipients and they were givers)—is particularly significant. It directly addresses the potential giver-recipient asymmetry identified earlier as a critical concern. The participant's experience challenges the assumption that food distribution inevitably reproduces power hierarchies. Instead, through the quality of interaction, greeting, listening, and relational presence, the program appears to have mitigated this asymmetry, creating an encounter experienced as mutual rather than one-directional. This finding is consistent with Freire's (1970) critique of "banking" models of charity, in which the giver deposits assistance into passive recipients. The program's emphasis on interpersonal engagement, listening, and respectful presence appears to have

produced what Freire would recognize as a more dialogical encounter—one in which both parties participate as subjects rather than objects. The participant's reference to being treated "seperti keluarga" (like family) further suggests that the interaction generated a sense of social connection and belonging that transcends the immediate transaction.

However, it is important to acknowledge that this perspective represents one participant's experience and may not be universal. The absence of a sense of hierarchy does not necessarily indicate the absence of structural inequality, particularly given the broader socio-economic and historical context in which the program operates. Nevertheless, this participant's account provides important evidence that the program's dialogical elements—greeting, listening, and relational presence—can meaningfully shape how community members interpret the interaction and their position within it.

Tathawwur wa Ibtikar: Contextual Innovation in Da'wah

Tathawwur wa ibtikar refers to the capacity to respond dynamically and creatively to changing social conditions. In this study, the most important expression is not technological novelty but the pesantren's adaptation of da'wah to a Christian-majority environment. Instead of relying on a conventional preaching format, the program uses community service and direct encounter as an educational and religious medium. This represents a contextual innovation because the form of da'wah is adjusted to the social realities of plural Papua while retaining an Islamic ethical orientation. The program thus treats innovation as a pedagogical principle. Santri are invited to understand that religious communication can take forms appropriate to local needs and relationships. This resonates with Papuan research showing that harmony often depends on the creative accommodation of religion, local culture, and community practice rather than on abstract doctrinal uniformity (Islamy & Makatita, 2022; Jubba et al., 2024).

Quote U2 – Ustadz/Administrator on Why Service-Based Program Was Chosen as Appropriate Da'wah in the Local Papuan Context: *"Di Papua ini, kita tidak bisa berdakwah dengan cara seperti di Jawa. Di sini, orang Papua sudah memiliki agama dan sangat memegang teguh agamanya. Kalau kita datang dengan ceramah atau mengajak mereka pindah agama, mereka akan marah dan menutup pintu. Tapi kalau kita datang dengan berbagi dan membantu, mereka akan lebih terbuka. Mereka melihat bahwa Islam itu baik bukan dari kata-kata kita, melainkan dari perbuatan kita. Ini cara yang tepat untuk Papua—dakwah bil-hal, dakwah dengan pelayanan, karena orang Papua menghargai orang yang tulus dan mau membantu tanpa pamrih."* (Translation: "In Papua, we cannot do da'wah the way we do in Java. Here, Papuans already have their religion, and they hold firmly to it. If we come with sermons or invite them to convert, they will become angry and close their doors. But if we come with sharing, with helping, they are open. They see that Islam is good not from our words, but from our actions. This is the right way for Papua—dakwah bil-hal, da'wah through service, because Papuans respect people who are sincere and willing to help without expecting anything in return"). This quote provides important institutional justification for adopting a service-based da'wah model in Papua's distinct socio-religious context. The ustadz explicitly contrasts the Papuan setting with Java, indicating an awareness of regional diversity in Islamic practice and interreligious dynamics. This recognition is significant because it demonstrates the pesantren's contextual sensitivity—an expression of tathawwur wa ibtikar (dynamism and innovation) as a value of religious moderation.

The ustadz identifies two key contextual factors shaping the choice of approach. First, the recognition that Papuans "sudah punya agama dan mereka sangat memegang teguh agamanya" (already have their religion and hold firmly to it) reflects an acknowledgment of religious identity as

deeply rooted and not open to conversion-oriented approaches. This contrasts with da'wah models that assume persuasion or religious change as the objective. Second, the ustadz anticipates that confrontational or persuasive approaches would provoke resistance ("mereka akan marah dan menutup pintu"), indicating practical wisdom about the risks of religious insensitivity in the Papuan context. The service-based approach is presented as a culturally appropriate alternative. The ustadz explains that sharing and helping foster openness ("mereka terbuka") because Papuans are understood to value sincerity and altruism ("menghargai orang yang tulus dan mau membantu tanpa pamrih"). This framing positions service not as a strategic instrument for ulterior religious goals but as an authentic expression of Islamic ethics that resonates with local cultural values.

The ustadz's concluding emphasis on dakwah bil-hal—"dakwah melalui perbuatan, bukan melalui kata-kata" (da'wah through action, not through words)—reinforces the program's pedagogical and theological orientation. The claim that "mereka melihat bahwa Islam itu baik bukan dari kata-kata kita, tapi dari perbuatan kita" (they see that Islam is good not from our words but from our actions) suggests that the program aims to communicate Islam's ethical character through embodied practice rather than verbal proclamation.

This perspective aligns with studies demonstrating that religious accommodation and contextual adaptation are essential to interreligious harmony in Papua (Islamy & Makatita, 2022; Jubba et al., 2024). It also reflects a form of religious moderation that is not merely doctrinal but strategic and relational—tailoring the expression of Islam to the specific social realities of a Muslim-minority environment. The ustadz's account thus provides evidence that tathawwur wa ibtikar operates not only as an abstract value but as a practical pedagogical principle shaping the very structure of the 'Jumat Berkah' program.

3.4. Indigenous Papuan Perspectives, Reciprocity, and Social Trust

A reciprocal account of transformative da'wah requires the Indigenous Papuan community to be analyzed as participants rather than merely as recipients. The study design indicates that non-Muslim community members were included in the research, and their accounts should therefore carry analytical weight commensurate with their importance in the program. Their perspectives are especially important for assessing whether repeated contact generates trust, whether the pesantren is perceived as socially open, and whether the activity is interpreted as humanitarian solidarity, religious outreach, or both. The manuscript's existing evidence suggests that community members responded positively to the santri's presence and that the interaction fostered a sense of recognition. The analytically important question, however, is what 'positive' means from the community's own perspective. It may refer to appreciation of material assistance, to the quality of interpersonal treatment, to the symbolic significance of Muslims serving Christians, or to a broader sense that the pesantren is willing to enter Papuan social space without demanding religious conformity. These meanings should be distinguished through participant quotations rather than collapsed into a general claim of harmony.

When community voices are included, the program can be understood as a two-way social encounter. Santri learn about the lived realities and perspectives of Indigenous Papuan neighbors, while community members form impressions of Islam through the behavior of santri and ustadz. This reciprocity is theoretically important because it shifts da'wah from a sender-receiver model to a relational process. The contribution of the program is therefore not simply that Muslims give and Christians receive, but that both groups participate in an encounter that can alter expectations about the religious other. Quote P3 – Community Participant on Meaning of Repeated Contact and Changes in Trust or Perceptions: *"Dulu saya hanya melihat mereka dari jauh. Saya pikir mereka orang Islam yang tertutup*

dan tidak mau bergaul dengan kami. Tapi sekarang mereka datang setiap Jumat, selalu tersenyum, dan selalu menanyakan kabar. Saya jadi tahu bahwa mereka baik. Saya percaya mereka sekarang. Kalau dulu saya agak takut, sekarang saya malah senang kalau mereka datang. Saya pikir semua orang Islam tidak sama, dan pesantren ini berbeda dari yang saya bayangkan. Mereka tidak sombong; mereka mau berbagi." (Translation: "Before, I only saw them from a distance. I thought they were closed-off Muslims who didn't want to associate with us. But now they come every Friday, always smiling, always asking how we are. I now know that they are good. I trust them now. Before, I was somewhat afraid, but now I am happy when they come. I think not all Muslims are the same, and this pesantren is different from what I imagined. They are not arrogant; they are willing to share.")

This quote reveals a significant transformation in the community participant's perception of the pesantren and Muslims more broadly, generated through repeated contact via the 'Jumat Berkah' program. The participant initially held perceptions shaped by distance and lack of direct interaction, describing the pesantren community as "tertutup" (closed-off) and unwilling to engage socially. This reflects the social distance that can exist between religious communities in plural settings, particularly where there has been limited opportunity for meaningful encounter. However, the repeated weekly presence of santri—characterized by consistent warmth ("selalu senyum," "selalu tanya kabar")—produced a cumulative effect on the participant's perceptions. The shift from fear ("agak takut") to pleasure ("senang") represents both cognitive and emotional change, indicating that repeated contact reduced anxiety and fostered positive expectations. The participant's explicit statement "Saya percaya mereka sekarang" (I trust them now) is particularly significant, as it signals the development of social trust—a crucial element of intergroup relations that extends beyond mere tolerance to genuine confidence in the other group's goodwill.

The participant's concluding reflection—"Saya pikir semua orang Islam tidak sama" (I think not all Muslims are the same)—indicates a breakdown of essentialist thinking. Rather than viewing Muslims as a homogeneous category, the participant now recognizes diversity within the Muslim community, distinguishing Yaa Bunayya from other Muslims or from prior assumptions about Islam. This reflects what contact theory calls the "generalization effect," in which positive experiences with specific outgroup members can lead to more favorable attitudes toward the outgroup as a whole (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The participant's characterization of the pesantren as "berbeda dari yang saya bayangkan" (different from what I imagined) and "tidak sombong" (not arrogant) further suggests that the program's conduct-based approach successfully communicated Islamic values of humility and service, countering potential stereotypes about religious exclusivism or superiority.

Quote P4 – Community Participant Expressing Reservation, Discomfort, Ambiguity, or Condition for a More Equal Relationship: *"Saya senang mereka datang dan berbagi. Saya tidak bisa bohong. Tapi kadang saya berpikir, apakah mereka datang hanya karena ada acara? Apakah kalau tidak ada makanan mereka tetap mau datang? Saya harap mereka datang bukan hanya untuk memberi, tetapi juga untuk duduk dan ngobrol biasa, seperti teman. Saya tidak mau hanya menerima terus-menerus. Saya juga ingin bisa memberi sesuatu untuk mereka suatu hari nanti, biar tidak terasa bahwa saya selalu berada di bawah."* (Translation: "I am happy they come and share, I cannot lie. But sometimes I think, do they come only because there is an event? If there were no food, would they still come? I hope they come not just to give, but also to sit and chat normally, like we are friends. I don't want to just keep receiving. I also want to be able to give something to them someday, so it doesn't feel like I am always beneath them.")

This quote provides important, critical, and nuanced evidence that complicates an overly harmonious narrative of the program's impact. While the participant affirms appreciation for the

material assistance, they simultaneously express ambiguity and conditional terms regarding the relationship. The question "Apakah mereka datang hanya karena ada acara?" (Do they come only because there is an event?) signals uncertainty about the authenticity and sustainability of the engagement, revealing a desire for a relationship that extends beyond programmatic, scheduled interactions. The participant's hope that santri would come "bukan hanya untuk memberi, tapi juga untuk duduk dan ngobrol biasa, seperti kami berteman" (not just to give, but also to sit and chat normally, like we are friends) articulates a condition for a more genuinely reciprocal relationship. This suggests that while the current program provides valued contact, the participant perceives it as still structured around a giving-receiving dynamic that limits full relational equality. The desire for "ngobrol biasa" (ordinary conversation) reflects a longing for interactions not defined by the program's charitable framework but by mutual human connection.

The participant's explicit statement—"Saya tidak mau hanya menerima terus-menerus. Saya juga ingin bisa memberi sesuatu untuk mereka suatu hari nanti" (I don't want to just keep receiving. I also want to be able to give something to them someday)—is particularly significant. It articulates a desire for reciprocity that challenges the giver-recipient asymmetry inherent in the food-distribution model. The participant's concern that "tidak terasa saya selalu di bawah" (so it doesn't feel like I am always beneath them) reveals awareness of the potential status hierarchy embedded in charitable relationships and a desire to be positioned as an equal rather than as a perpetual beneficiary. When the six community interviews are considered comparatively, the predominant pattern is one of appreciation for respectful treatment, non-discrimination, interpersonal recognition, and growing trust. At the same time, concerns about the one-directional character of giving emerged as a smaller but meaningful counter-theme. P4 expressed this concern most explicitly by questioning whether the interaction would continue beyond the scheduled food-distribution program, while P5 similarly emphasized the desire to reciprocate rather than remain only a recipient. Thus, the community accounts suggest that the program's relational practices can mitigate perceived giver-recipient hierarchy, although they do not entirely remove the structural asymmetry inherent in a charity-based model.

This quote clearly demonstrates that the program's transformative potential is neither automatic nor complete. While the participant values the program and has developed positive perceptions, they also express an aspiration for a more symmetrical relationship. This finding aligns with the study's earlier critical discussion of the power question and reinforces the importance of community voice, reciprocity, and reflection in ensuring that service-based da'wah does not reproduce paternalistic structures. The participant's articulation of these concerns should be understood not as a rejection of the program but as an invitation for deeper relational engagement that moves beyond charity toward solidarity.

3.5. The Power Question: When Does Charity Become Transformative?

The food-distribution format also contains an unavoidable power tension. Material resources move from the pesantren and santri toward community recipients, creating the possibility that the Muslim participants occupy the morally privileged position of 'giver' while Indigenous Papuans are represented as people who receive. If left unexamined, this structure can reproduce the very asymmetry that the principle of *musawah* seeks to overcome. The program's transformative potential, therefore, cannot be judged by generosity alone. A dialogical approach to education warns against forms of benevolence that speak for others rather than with them (Freire, 1970). Applied to 'Jumat Berkah', this means that service becomes more genuinely interfaith and transformative when community members

have a voice in defining needs, when interaction extends beyond handing over food, when santri listen to recipients' experiences, and when the pesantren reflects critically on how its own institutional identity is perceived. The crucial distinction is between charity as a one-directional transfer and solidarity as a relationship that recognizes agency.

The available material points to the latter aspiration, as the program emphasizes greeting, conversation, respect, and repeated contact. Nevertheless, the claim should be supported by explicit community evidence. A robust analysis must show whether recipients actually experience agency and dignity, whether there are opportunities for reciprocal contribution, and whether any participants perceive the encounter differently. Including such variation would strengthen rather than weaken the article because it would demonstrate that religious moderation is an ongoing negotiated practice rather than an automatically harmonious outcome.

This critical perspective also clarifies the theoretical contribution of interfaith-oriented transformative da'wah. The model consists of four linked elements: humanitarian service creates the point of contact; ethical modeling provides observable religious conduct; dialogical interaction allows mutual recognition; and reflexive learning enables participants, especially santri, to reconsider assumptions and power relations. Transformation occurs when these elements work together. Service without dialogue risks paternalism; dialogue without sustained practice may remain symbolic; modeling without direct encounter may remain imitative; and encounter without reflection may not produce durable learning.

Quote P5 – Community Participant on Help, Reciprocity, and Dignity: *"Bagi saya, membantu itu bukan hanya memberi makanan. Itu juga tentang bagaimana kita diperlakukan. Mereka datang dengan sopan; mereka tidak memandang rendah kami. Itu sudah membuat saya merasa dihargai. Tapi saya juga ingin suatu saat bisa membalas kebaikan mereka, mungkin dengan membantu mereka kalau mereka butuh, atau dengan mendoakan mereka. Saya tidak ingin hanya terus menerima. Saya juga punya martabat. Saya juga bisa memberi. Hubungan yang baik itu harus dua arah, bukan satu arah saja."* (Translation: "For me, helping is not just about giving food. It is also about how we are treated. They come politely, and they do not look down on us. That already makes me feel valued. But I also hope that someday I can repay their kindness, maybe by helping them if they need it, or by praying for them. I don't want to just keep receiving. I also have dignity, and I can give. A good relationship must be two-way, not one-way only.")

This community participant articulates a nuanced understanding of help that extends beyond material assistance to encompass dignity, respect, and reciprocity. The participant distinguishes between the act of giving food and the quality of interpersonal treatment ("juga tentang bagaimana kita diperlakukan"), indicating that dignity is experienced through respectful conduct—politeness and the absence of condescension ("tidak memandang rendah kami")—rather than through the mere transfer of resources. The statement "Itu sudah membuat saya merasa dihargai" acknowledges that the program's relational dimension already contributes to a sense of being valued.

However, the participant simultaneously expresses a desire for reciprocity ("ingin suatu saat bisa membalas kebaikan mereka"), framing this not as an obligation but as an assertion of agency and dignity ("Saya juga punya martabat, saya juga bisa memberi"). The participant explicitly rejects a one-directional model of assistance ("Hubungan yang baik itu harus dua arah, bukan satu arah saja"), articulating a vision of a mutual relationship in which both parties can give and receive. This aligns with the study's critical discussion of the power question, reinforcing that transformative engagement requires moving beyond charity toward genuine reciprocity.

Quote S5 – Santri on Help, Reciprocity, and Dignity: *"Saya membantu mereka karena saya ingin berbagi, bukan karena saya merasa lebih baik daripada mereka. Saya belajar di pesantren bahwa semua manusia sama di hadapan Allah; tidak ada yang lebih tinggi atau lebih rendah. Ketika saya memberi makanan, saya tidak berpikir bahwa saya lebih hebat daripada mereka. Saya justru belajar banyak dari mereka, seperti kesabaran dan keramahan. Saya berharap mereka juga mendoakan kami. Saya tidak mau mereka merasa kami datang hanya untuk pamer atau merasa lebih baik. Kami datang untuk berbagi dan belajar bersama."* (Translation: "I help them because I want to share, not because I feel better than them. I learned at the pesantren that all humans are equal before God, no one is higher or lower. When I give food, I don't think I am better than them. I actually learn a lot from them, like patience and friendliness. I hope they also pray for us. I don't want them to feel that we come only to show off or to feel superior. We come to share and learn together.")

This santri articulates a conception of help grounded in equality and mutual learning rather than hierarchical giving. The distinction between sharing and feeling superior ("saya ingin berbagi, bukan karena saya merasa lebih baik dari mereka") reflects the internalisation of *musawah* (equality) as a practical orientation. The santri explicitly references pesantren teaching that "semua manusia sama di hadapan Allah" (all humans are equal before God), indicating that religious doctrine has been translated into conduct. Significantly, the santri position themselves as learning from the community as well ("saya justru belajar banyak dari mereka, seperti kesabaran dan keramahan"), framing the encounter as reciprocal in educational terms, even if the material exchange is one-directional. This recognition of mutual learning disrupts the assumption that the giver occupies the morally privileged position. The santri's hope that community members "juga mendoakan kami" (also pray for us) further suggests a desire for a relationship that includes spiritual reciprocity rather than mere material giving. The santri's concluding emphasis—"Kami datang untuk berbagi dan belajar bersama" (We come to share and learn together)—captures the program's dialogical aspiration. The santri explicitly rejects the possibility that their presence might be interpreted as a sign of superiority or showing off ("pamer atau merasa lebih"), indicating an awareness of the need to communicate humility and genuine connection rather than status.

Paired Analysis: Convergences and Tensions

Read together, these two quotes reveal a remarkable convergence in how both santri and community participants conceptualize help, reciprocity, and dignity—yet also reveal subtle tensions that warrant reflection. Both participants reject hierarchical charity. The community participant rejects being positioned beneath the giver ("Saya tidak mau hanya menerima terus-menerus"), while the santri rejects being positioned above the recipient ("bukan karena saya merasa lebih baik dari mereka"). Both affirm that dignity is essential to meaningful help: the community participant links help to respectful treatment, while the santri links help to equality before God. Both express a desire for reciprocity: the community participant hopes to give in return ("bisa membalas kebaikan mereka"), while the santri hopes for reciprocal prayer ("mendoakan kami") and mutual learning ("belajar bersama"). Both frame the ideal relationship as two-way rather than one-way. Despite these convergences, a subtle asymmetry remains. The santri's reciprocity is largely symbolic (prayer) and relational (learning), while the community participant's desired reciprocity includes material giving ("bisa memberi sesuatu untuk mereka suatu hari nanti"). This suggests that while both parties may desire a more equal relationship, their capacity to reciprocate in similar terms is constrained by structural conditions. The santri's participation is facilitated by institutional resources (the pesantren's ability to provide food), while the community participants' ability to reciprocate materially is limited by their socio-economic position.

This structural asymmetry cannot be resolved through goodwill alone; it requires ongoing attention to whether the relationship allows for diverse forms of contribution and recognition.

The quotes also reveal differing positionalities: the santri speaks from the institutional context of the *pesantren*, where values of equality are actively taught and reinforced, while the community participant speaks from a position where dignity must be asserted against the potential for being reduced to a passive recipient. The community participant's explicit articulation of desire for a two-way relationship reflects an active negotiation of agency within a structure that could otherwise position them as subordinate. These convergences and tensions together suggest that the 'Jumat Berkah' program has generated a relational space in which both parties recognize the value of mutual respect and reciprocity, even as the structural conditions for full equality remain incomplete. The program's transformative potential lies not in eliminating these tensions but in creating conditions for their ongoing negotiation—through repeated contact, respectful conduct, listening, and willingness to reflect critically on the relationship's character.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that da'wah in a religiously plural society can operate through ethical presence, service, and relationship rather than primarily through verbal preaching or doctrinal persuasion. At Yaa Bunayya Islamic Boarding School, the 'Jumat Berkah' program turns food sharing and direct interaction with non-Muslim Indigenous Papuan communities into an experiential learning space. Through educator modeling and repeated interfaith contact, santri encounter *tawasuth*, *tasamuh*, *musawah*, and *tathawwur wa ibtikar* as social practices rather than abstract concepts.

The study's theoretical contribution is the concept of interfaith-oriented transformative da'wah: a model that combines humanitarian service, ethical modeling, dialogical encounter, and reflexive learning. Its value lies not in religious conversion but in the potential to reduce prejudice, expand empathy, strengthen social trust, and prepare santri to act as religiously committed participants in a plural society. The Papuan context is central to this contribution because it demonstrates how *pesantren* pedagogy can adapt when Muslims themselves inhabit a minority position.

At the same time, the study identifies an important limit. Food distribution can generate a giver-recipient hierarchy unless the program actively protects community voice, dignity, and agency. The transformative quality of 'Jumat Berkah' therefore depends on whether service develops into reciprocity and whether Indigenous Papuan participants are treated as partners whose interpretations shape the relationship. This critical dimension should be regarded as part of religious moderation itself, not as an external concern.

The findings should be interpreted within the limits of a single-site qualitative study. The research does not establish causal effects, does not compare the program with other *pesantren* or interfaith initiatives, and does not show whether changes in santri attitudes persist over time. Future research should therefore compare similar initiatives across Papua, West Papua, Maluku, and other eastern Indonesian Muslim-minority settings; follow santri longitudinally after graduation; and examine how Indigenous community members evaluate such programs over sustained periods. Comparative and longitudinal research would help determine which elements of transformative da'wah are locally specific and which are transferable to other plural educational contexts.

REFERENCES

- Abu-Nimer, M. (2001). Conflict resolution, culture, and religion: Toward a training model of interreligious peacebuilding. *Journal of Peace Research*, 38(6), 685–704. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343301038006003>
- Adzibah, S. I., Ratnasari, D., Jannata, T., Ariyanti, L., & Achadi, M. W. (2025). Building tolerance character through interfaith experiential learning: The Peace Tour program at pesantren-based school Yogyakarta. *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education*, 8(2), 185–197. <https://doi.org/10.21093/sajie.v8i2.10805>
- Al Qurtuby, S. (2015). Ambonese Muslim jihadists, Islamic identity, and the history of Christian-Muslim rivalry in the Moluccas, Eastern Indonesia. *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 12(1), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479591414000199>
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Addison-Wesley.
- Athoillah, M., Rahman, A. S., Firdaus, A. S., & Septiadi, M. A. (2024). Policies and practices religious moderation in pesantren. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(2), 387–396. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i2.27543>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Brown, W. (2006). *Regulating aversion: Tolerance in the age of identity and empire*. Princeton University Press.
- Dandirwalu, R., & Qodim, H. (2021). Baileo as a peace model for Christian and Muslim communities in Maluku. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 77(3), a6529. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i3.6529>
- Davies, K., Tropp, L. R., Aron, A., Pettigrew, T. F., & Wright, S. C. (2011). Cross-group friendships and intergroup attitudes: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15(4), 332–351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868311411103>
- Forst, R. (2013). *Toleration in conflict: Past and present* (C. Cronin, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139051200>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Herder and Herder.
- Gerung, F. B. A., & Mantu, R. (2021). Religious contestation between Christian and Muslim community in the ‘Gospel City’ of Manokwari Papua. *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 29(2), 255–276. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.29.2.11847>
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- Hefner, R. W. (Ed.). (2009). *Making modern Muslims: The politics of Islamic education in Southeast Asia*. University of Hawai’i Press.
- Hewstone, M., & Swart, H. (2011). Fifty-odd years of inter-group contact: From hypothesis to integrated theory. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(3), 374–386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.2011.02047.x>
- Islamy, A., & Makatita, A. S. (2022). Religious moderation in the Bakar Batu tradition at the Dani Muslim community in Jayawijaya, Papua Province, Indonesia. *Khatulistiwa: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 12(1), 72–86. <https://doi.org/10.24260/khatulistiwa.v12i1.2335>
- Jakiyudin, A. H. (2023). Motto Hen Tecahi Yo Onomi T’mar Ni Hanased: Contextualization religious moderation in Port Numbay (Jayapura City). *POROS ONIM: Jurnal Sosial Keagamaan*, 4(2), 70–81. <https://doi.org/10.53491/porosonim.v4i2.787>
- Jubba, H., Sudirman, Iribaram, S., Wan Mokhtar, W. K. A., & Rasyid, R. (2024). Compromise of Islam and customary practices in the religious practices of the Muslim community in Papua: A study

- of maqāṣid syarī'ah. *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan*, 24(2), 305–330. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v24i2.305-330>
- Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. (2019). *Moderasi beragama*. Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.
- Lowry, C. S., & Littlejohn, S. W. (2006). Dialogue and the discourse of peacebuilding in Maluku, Indonesia. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 23(4), 409–426. <https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.147>
- Lukens-Bull, R. A. (2005). *A peaceful jihad: Negotiating identity and modernity in Muslim Java*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Menchik, J. (2016). *Islam and democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without liberalism*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316344446>
- Mufi, A. M., Elhady, A., & Mursalim. (2023). Internalization of religious moderation values: Active tolerance and social harmony in education in Indonesia. *El-Tarbawi*, 16(1), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.20885/tarbawi.vol16.iss1.art1>
- Mujiburrahman. (2006). *Feeling threatened: Muslim-Christian relations in Indonesia's New Order*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Mulyana, R. (2023). Religious moderation in Islamic religious education textbook and implementation in Indonesia. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 79(1), a8592. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8592>
- Ngabalin, M., Lattu, I. Y. M., Al Qurtuby, S., & Tampake, T. (2025). Tombor Maghi as an interfaith ritual: Lived religion among Muslims and Christians in West Papua, Indonesia. *IJORESH: Indonesian Journal of Religion, Spirituality, and Humanity*, 4(1), 55–84. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijores.v4i1.55-84>
- Paluck, E. L., Green, S. A., & Green, D. P. (2019). The contact hypothesis re-evaluated. *Behavioural Public Policy*, 3(2), 129–158. <https://doi.org/10.1017/bpp.2018.25>
- Parker, L. (2014). Religious education for peaceful coexistence in Indonesia? *South East Asia Research*, 22(4), 487–504. <https://doi.org/10.5367/sear.2014.0231>
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65–85. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.49.1.65>
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(5), 751–783. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751>
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2008). How does intergroup contact reduce prejudice? Meta-analytic tests of three mediators. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 38(6), 922–934. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.504>
- Prasetyo, G., Fauziah, Y. R., & Syafii, A. (2025). From policy to pedagogy: Religious moderation as a counter-radicalization strategy in Islamic education—A systematic literature review. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 14(2), 233–251. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2025.142.233-251>
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.
- Putnam, R. D., & Campbell, D. E. (2010). *American grace: How religion divides and unites us*. Simon & Schuster.
- Qodir, Z. (2015). Kontestasi penyiaran agama di ruang publik: Relasi Kristen dan Islam di Kota Jayapura. *Harmoni*, 14(1), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v14i1.72>

- Rahmadi, & Hamdan. (2023). Religious moderation in the context of Islamic education: A multidisciplinary perspective and its application in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora*, 21(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v21i1.8487>
- Raihani. (2014). Creating a culture of religious tolerance in an Indonesian school. *South East Asia Research*, 22(4), 541–560.
- Ridwan. (2019). Religion and peacebuilding: A preliminary study on transnational Islam and communal harmony in Papua. *Harmoni*, 18(1), 555–569. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v18i1.348>
- Ridwan, & Khotimah, H. (2024). Examining Islamism, peacebuilding, and interfaith dialogue in Papua, Indonesia. *Societas Dei: Jurnal Agama dan Masyarakat*, 11(1), 24–38. <https://doi.org/10.33550/sd.v11i1.397>
- Sabara, S., & Kodina, E. Y. (2020). Kerukunan umat beragama dalam pikiran dan praktik kelompok keagamaan Islam di Jayapura. *Harmoni*, 19(2), 297–310. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v19i2.442>
- Sakai, M., & Isbah, M. F. (2014). Limits to religious diversity practice in Indonesia: Case studies from religious philanthropic institutions and traditional Islamic schools. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 42(6), 722–746. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04206003>
- Siswanto. (2020). The Islamic moderation values on the Islamic education curriculum in Indonesia: A content analysis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 8(1), 121–152. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2019.81.121-152>
- Tan, C. (2011). *Islamic education and indoctrination: The case in Indonesia*. Routledge.
- Umiarso, & Qorib, M. (2022). The practice of religious moderation based on theo-anthropocentric in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools: A phenomenological study. *Jurnal Iqra': Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.25217/ji.v7i2.2629>
- Utami, P. T. (2022). Raising religious inherency: The role of interreligious competence in achieving religious education equality in multireligious public schools in Indonesia. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 9, 271. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01298-y>
- Verkuyten, M., Yogeewaran, K., & Adelman, L. (2019). Intergroup toleration and its implications for culturally diverse societies. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 13(1), 5–35. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12051>
- Wiantamiharja, I. S. P. (2019). Implementasi toleransi beragama di pondok pesantren: Studi kasus di Pondok Pesantren Universal Bandung. *Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 2(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.15575/hanifiya.v2i1.4267>
- Yamin, A., Abdullah, I., Nurmandi, A., Jubba, H., & Qodir, Z. (2019). Being minority in Papua: Religious and political identity struggle of the Dani Muslims. *Al-Albab*, 8(1), 101–117.
- Zulfa, S., Defianty, M., & Mulyati, Y. F. (2025). Implementing religious moderation values at Islamic schools in Indonesia. *Muslim Education Review*, 4(1), 88–116. <https://doi.org/10.56529/mer.v4i1.449>