

DEALING WITH THE RELIGIOUS MODERATION OF STIT MADANI AS A PESANTREN-HIGHER EDUCATION IN YOGYAKARTA

Mahmud Arif¹, Sibawaihi², Muhammad Zalnur³, Abd. Razak bin Zakaria⁴

¹²Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta; Indonesia

³Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang; Indonesia

⁴University of Malaya; Malaysia

Corresponding email: ayahandarifda@yahoo.com

Submitted: 23/08/2026

Revised: 14/09/2026

Accepted: 13/10/2026

Published: 20/10/2026

Abstract

This study aims to examine the actualization of religious moderation at a pesantren-higher education institution that adheres to Salafism. This issue is interesting to study, considering that Salafism and religious moderation are generally considered opposites. Naturally, Salafism is then accused of being anti-religious moderation. This study revealed that such accusations were not entirely valid. This study is a qualitative approach that delves into a private higher education institution in Bantul, Special Region of Yogyakarta, i.e., STIT Madani, which represents a pesantren-higher education with “an adaptive” ideology of Salafism as seen from its openness to government policies and the culture of its surrounding community. So, studying it is important to reveal the role of pesantren-college with non-mainstream ideology or Salafism. The selection of informants using the technique of purposive sampling by data collection methods includes observation, interview, and document. After that, the collected field data were transcribed into field notes and interpreted with analytical induction. The findings show that the existence and role of STIT Madani Yogyakarta, with its integrative education system, is a synergy model in implementing such responsibility. The integrative education system of that Pesantren-Higher Education is not only in terms of management but also in terms of curriculum development in line with its ideological basis of pesantren. The existence of a boarding system greatly supports the integration of the higher education institution with its pesantren and fosters the role of the Pesantren-Higher Education in strengthening religious moderation that is in line with its “ideological” choice.

Keywords

PAI Curriculum, Religious Moderation, STIT Madani, Pesantren-Higher Education, Salafism.



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY NC) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

INTRODUCTION

In the book *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren and Tarekat*, Martin van Bruinessen (Bruinessen, 1995) mentions the opinion of some experts who stated that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, besides mosques, pesantren was the second type of important Islamic centers. Historically, pesantren is not only synonymous with the meaning of Islam, but also contains the meaning of Indonesian authenticity or indigenous tone (Majid, 1997). Over time, as one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions, the *pesantren* continues to develop, one of them through their openness to the modern education system and national education policies. Although maintaining their traditional role, many *pesantrens* have modernized themselves by organizing formal education systems through *madrasahs*, schools, and universities, changing their curriculum, and improving their management. Through these various changes, *pesantren* is considered to have undergone significant institutional developments (Muthmainnah et al., 2025) to go beyond its traditional role.

In the context of going beyond the traditional role of pesantren, it is interesting to discuss the phenomenon of the rise of PTP and Salafism-affiliated pesantren. These two phenomena show that the role of pesantren is still worthy of being maintained, but must be accompanied by "reformation" in terms of its management, curriculum, and educational orientation, and even its ideology. By PTP, several weaknesses of pesantren are being revised, such as regarding its curriculum and its educational orientation. Therefore, as a form of collaboration (integration) of pesantren and college, PTP is recognized as having contributed many positives to the development of pesantren, among others, in the fields of improving the quality of education, developing human resource capacity, and strengthening the social role of pesantren (Bali, 2017; Kamal & Effendi, 2026).

Meanwhile, the phenomenon of Salafism-affiliated pesantren shows the new development of the Islamic purification movement, which is part of the influence of transnational Islamic movements in Indonesia. The development of that movement has given birth to a new Islamic education model that complements the existing old models in the form of *madrasahs* and pesantren that have a long history in Indonesia. At least, there are two new models developed by that movement, including integrated Islamic schools and Salafism-affiliated pesantren (Makruf & Asrori, 2022). Even now, Salafism pesantren-affiliated college) has also been developed, although it is still outside the integrated Islamic school network. As a new model of Islamic education driven by the Salafism movement, some experts consider it to be a breeding ground for the seeds of radicalism given that the influence of transnational Islamic movements has encouraged the reformulation or

contestation of Salafism which is no longer just a religious purification, but also a socio-political thought that underlies the ideology of the radical Salafism movement (Jamhari, 2004; Basith et al., 2026).

Those developments, in turn, tend to lead to increasingly diverse system configurations because several national education rules/regulations and policies in the Reform era are increasingly taking sides with the *pesantren*. In the Reform era, in addition to its position as an integral part of the national education system, it is essential to strengthen it, based on the Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah/PP*) Number 55 of 2007, Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning *Pesantren*, the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (*Peraturan Menteri Agama/PMA*) Numbers 30, 31, and 32 of 2020, and the Presidential Decree Number 82 of 2021, *pesantren* is recognized as an institution that has the functions of education, missionary (*da'wah*), and community empowerment at the same time so that it can take part more widely exceptionally to be an educational institution such as a *madrasah* for the school level and a university for the tertiary level.

In the context of the history of Islamic education reform in Indonesia, *pesantren*-based higher education institutions have cultural and institutional uniqueness. The reason is that historically, the reform of Islamic education in general, such as *madrasahs* and religious higher education institutions, was born as a form of criticism of the traditional educational system of *pesantren*, so the birth of Islamic higher education institutions was widely initiated by reformist Muslims who disapproved of traditional Islam and its educational institutions: the *pesantren*. Meanwhile, *pesantren*-based higher education institutions or *Pesantren-Higher Education or College* (*Perguruan Tinggi Pesantren* or PTP) are a form of “renewal” of the *pesantren* system driven by the internal community of *pesantren*. Therefore, the vision of PTP generally seeks to combine the *pesantren* education system, as its “parent”, with the higher education system. This historical root is certainly interesting when placed in the context of the modernization of national education and the infiltration of radical religiosity originating from the transnational Islamic movement because it raises various severe challenges that *pesantrens* must face. From the side of *pesantren*, there are accusations from some circles in the West that *pesantren* has become the breeding ground of radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia (Sholeh, 2007). Some sectors claim that the infusion of new ideas on comprehending Islam in higher education has erased the old values and knowledge that were ingrained in *pesantren* (Jamhari, 2004).

Under such a historical baseline, the unifying carried out (hopefully) will not erase the thick “nuances” of *pesantren* from PTP regarding curriculum, management, and leadership. The thick nuances of *pesantren* in the curriculum can be seen from the pattern of religious education developed, such as the portion, intensity, and orientation of Islamic studies (*tafaqquh fi al-din*), priority on character development, and traditional scientific teaching (Mujahid, 2021). Therefore, the identification of the traditional role of *pesantren* usually includes (1) as a center for the transmission of traditional sciences, (2) as a custodian of the continuity of traditional Islam, and (3) as a center for the reproduction of ulama (Jamhari, 2004). The birth of PTP marks the dynamics of *pesantren* that have passed over those traditional roles, as well as a form of adaptation and accommodation mechanism for *pesantren* to the changing challenges of the times (Asrohah, 2011).

From the standpoint of the development of *pesantren*, PTP is a product of the *pesantren* education system that has undergone a convergence process (Sindhunata, 2000). In the process of convergence, *pesantrens* make changes in two ways: revising their curriculum by including more general subjects or even general skills and opening their institutions and educational facilities to benefit general education (Azra, 1999). In short, PTP is the result of the modern development of *pesantren* education, both in the form of criticism and as an update, so that it is no longer *just different* from *pesantren* but should also *be one step ahead* of and *complementary to the pesantren* education system. As the fountainhead of Islam in the country, *pesantrens* are facing serious problems in the form of radical religious infiltration. Even some parties accuse *pesantrens* of being a breeding ground for radicalism (Darmadji, 2011; Umar, 2014). It was established that several *pesantrens* were connected to extremist Islamic activities and movements (Isbah, 2020).

Departing from that, as an educational institution that mostly grew from and is managed by Muslims, PTP is a form of “convergence” of *pesantren* in responding to changes in educational demands and challenges that are developing in people’s lives, and at the same time, a symbol of the academic prestige of *pesantren* in strengthening its public role. In such a context, the PTP phenomenon is intriguing to examine because it is always integrally related to the institutional image of *pesantren*. As the peak of the dynamics of *pesantren* reform, PTP is expected to remain loyal to the traditional roles of *pesantren*, while also being required to be able to appear as an academic institution that strengthens the functions of education, da’wah, and community empowerment carried out by *pesantren* through the development of religious moderation in the religious education curriculum which is the core of *pesantren* science and PTP’s academic concern.

In such a context, the role of *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah/STIT* (College of Islamic Education) Madani, Yogyakarta, is fascinating to discuss, considering that it is a representative of PTPs, which have a distinction because of the ideological non-mainstream of *pesantren* adhered to. However, it has the ideology of Salafism, which PTP actually declares itself to be pro-moderation, considering that in various places, Salafism tends to be opposite to the religious moderation movement, which often causes friction (Derajat & Syafiqurrahman, 2025). Indeed, Salafism is not one-sided; some are hard, and others are soft. Salafism that is open to other groups and willing to comply with government policies usually tends to be soft. Furthermore, the full integration of *pesantren* and higher education has shown a typical convergence model of education implementation in adapting religious moderation and institutional openness to modernization. Despite adhering to the ideological non-mainstream of *pesantren*, the mentioned PTP shows absolute alignment towards strengthening religious moderation through various campus and *pesantren* curricular programs.

Several previous articles have discussed religious moderation, strengthening religious moderation or deradicalization efforts in universities, and religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools, as affirmed by Wirian et al., (2025) and as seen in the following description. *First*, Kasdi, 2019 “Wasathiyah Islam as the Road to Moderatism in Indonesia” discusses the implementation of *the concept of wasathiyah* as the path to Islamic moderatism in Indonesia. By *wasathiyah*, people can practice Islam within the framework of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Republic of Indonesia, and Bhineka Tunggal Ika, and introduce the need to apply *the spider web* method in the fourth period of Islamic studies from 1996 until now. *Second*, Sultoni et al., (2026), “Strategies to Strengthen Religious Moderation in Universities” examines public universities, especially Universitas Negeri Malang (UM), in strengthening religious moderation, such as through the strategy of establishing religious moderation institutions, inserting the value of moderation into lectures, and religious mentoring. *Third*, Anwar & Muhayati, (2021) “Efforts to Build Religious Moderation Attitudes Through Islamic Religious Education in Public University Students” discusses the role of PAI in preventing the spread of extremism and radicalism on campus. As a basic course in public universities, PAI has the opportunity to form a religious moderation attitude among students. *Fourth*, Mujahid, (2021) “Islamic orthodoxy-based character education: creating moderate Muslims in a modern pesantren in Indonesia,” examines the pattern of character education at the pesantren as-Salam Surakarta, a pesantren that combines the Salafi Islamic boarding school education system and the modern education system.

What distinguishes the articles above from this article is that the articles (1) discuss religious moderation and PAI conceptually-reflectively, (2) examine religious education in General/Public Colleges or Islamic Religious Colleges in deradicalization efforts and strengthening religious moderation, and (3) focus on the study of character education patterns in modern *pesantren*. Meanwhile, this article focuses on studying the curriculum of *pesantren*-higher education institutions with Salafism ideology in promoting religious moderation. Thus, the focus of this article's study not only shows "distinctiveness" but also shows "absurdity" in the perspective of some people, because it discusses Salafism and strengthening religious moderation.

The focus of this article's study is based on theoretical assumptions regarding the curriculum, PAI, *Pesantren*-higher education, and religious moderation. Experts differ in defining the curriculum. In a narrow sense, the curriculum is several courses offered by an educational institution for students to take. In a broad sense, the curriculum is the entire effort of an educational institution to influence students both inside and outside the classroom. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the content and subject materials, as well as the methods used as guidelines for implementing teaching and learning activities. For curriculum development, there are at least four components that need to be considered, namely (1) what goals will be achieved, (2) what learning experiences need to be prepared to achieve the goals, (3) how the learning experiences are organized effectively, and (4) how to determine the success of learning. Identifies several definitions of curriculum, including planned activity programs, expected learning outcomes, cultural reproduction, and social reconstruction agendas.

There are at least two points of view in looking at PAI, namely, PAI as an activity and PAI as a phenomenon. As an activity, PAI contains the intention of consciously and planned efforts to help students develop their outlook on life, attitude to life, and life skills, which are imbued with Islamic teachings/values. This is the significance of the PAI curriculum, which means a set of plans concerning objectives, content/materials, strategies/methods, and evaluation of PAI learning, both in the classroom and outside the classroom, which produces curriculum documents (formal curriculum), actual curriculum (elaboration of curriculum documents), instructional curriculum (implementation of curriculum into learning), and experiential curriculum (the impact of the curriculum on student learning outcomes).

METHOD

This study is qualitative research using a case study of a private higher education institution in Indonesia: STIT Madani Bantul Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, during three months. The selection of this institution was based on the fact that it has developed the Pesantren-Colleges (PTP), besides its reputation and unique characteristics, i.e., an institution grounded in Salafist ideology. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and document analysis (Arikunto, 2010), considering that the data collected were in the form of activities, places, or empirical atmosphere, behaviors, opinions, reasoning, perspectives, and documents or archives.

Observations were carried out on October 23 - 24, 2025, and December 5 - 6, 2025. Through those two stages of observation, researchers can obtain more verified data. Observations were used to collect data on the academic atmosphere, learning activities, and daily activities in the pesantren-college environment. Interviews were maximized to explore data on the views of religious master (ustad), campus leaders, lecturers, and students regarding the ideological affiliation of the pesantren, how it is actualized in various academic and social activities, and the institutional dynamics of the pesantren-college. Meanwhile, document analysis is used to collect data from reports or written notes regarding the curriculum, activity schedule, and others that are a reference for academic and non-academic activities of pesantren-college.

The collected field data were transcribed into field notes, which include descriptions and reflections. Description is the transcription of field data according to what has been successfully obtained through data collection techniques. At the same time, reflection is the researcher's interpretation of the results of the data description. Starting from the field notes, the researcher analyzed the PTP patterns to explore the basic tendencies or characteristics of the religious education curriculum developed both directly and indirectly to foster religious moderation. Here, the principle of qualitative research seeks to be applied, namely the principle of mutual simultaneous shaping between theory and field data (Moleong, 2013).

Analytical Process

The selection of informants using purposive sampling with data collection techniques includes: observation, interview, and document analysis. Informants came from leaders, lecturers, and students of that PTP as the subject of research. The collection of primary data was carried out through (1) interviews with relevant informants, namely one religious master, four lectures, two leaders, and some senior students of STIT Madani, (2) observations to students' activities both inside

and outside of the classroom, and (3) documentation, with horizontal collaboration, namely internal collaboration among the team of researchers, in the data analysis process which includes stages: recording field data, analyzing field data through the processes of open coding, axial coding, and thematic coding, reinforced by triangulation, and moving towards results.

Qualitative research has the following characteristics: (1) naturalistic i.e. research process seeks natural background, (2) dynamic that means a process disclosure, capturing reality through intensive contact in the field, (3) subject-centred, (4) descriptive, (5) constructivist i.e. human-created social world, (6) context-sensitive, (7) reflexive, (8) inductive, and (9) empathetic i.e. trying to understand (Sarantakos, 2017). As a group, research, data collection, and analysis are carried out collaboratively between researchers. The data analysis process includes field data recording, field data analysis, and movement toward results. In order to obtain research findings, analytical induction has been applied, which is a process of testing or verifying and thoroughly reflecting on the data of research results in the framework of inference: meaning and transferability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Pesantren Model of STIT Madani Yogyakarta

STIT Madani Yogyakarta is a *pesantren*-based college located in the eastern Bantul area. The development of this college cannot be separated from the existence of the Pondok Pesantren Islamic Center Bin Baz (PPICBB), Piyungan, Bantul, Yogyakarta. PPICBB is one of the Islamic Boarding Schools or *pesantrens* in Yogyakarta, which was established in 1993. It started as Ma'had Tahfizhul Qur'an in Sleman, Yogyakarta, and continues to grow. Seven years later, in 2000, this Ma'had occupied a new location in Sitimulyo Village, Piyungan, Bantul, and the name Bin Baz Islamic Center began to be used (*Document of STIT Madani*). Bin Baz's name is taken from the name of one of the famous muftis in Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz (d. 1999), as one of the figures in the contemporary era who is a reference for Salafi followers, with hopes and aspirations so that the students can emulate his knowledge, piety, generosity, and charisma in front of the people. PPICBB organizes an integrated education program between religious teaching and general science

PPICBB has been associated with a *Salafi pesantren* or *pesantren with conservative ideology, which is a pesantren that adheres to the way taken in understanding, believing, and practicing the religion of Allah*

(Islam), by adhering to the Qur'an and hadith as practiced by the first three generations of the Prophet's successors. The *Salafi manhaj* (the conservative Islamic ideology system) embraced by Ustadz Abu Nida' Chomsaha Shofwan (b. 1954) as an alumnus of the Imam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud University of Saudi Arabia and the founding figure of PPICBB, is allegedly a different direction from the *Salafi manhaj* embraced by Ustadz Ja'far Umar Talib (d. 2019). Before breaking up, they were colleagues in eradicating all forms of idolatry and heresy practiced by most Muslims in Indonesia.

Before the breakup, the Salafism embraced by Abu Nida was classified as very puritan and conservative. Many of his followers, who were students, no longer wanted to complete their studies at public universities because the sciences they studied were considered not to be Islamic sciences. Then, they switched to merely focus on studying traditional Islamic sciences based on the books of *turats* programmed at PPICB. Obviously, the dichotomous perspective is still very strong as a basis for classifying knowledge, wherein Islamic sciences (or religious sciences) are considered more important and need to be prioritized. If in the scientific context, their views are like that, then in the context of the issue of faith and worship, certainly their views are more puritan and conservative.

Based on that classification, PPICBB ideologically is more affiliated with purist-cooperative Salafism. Generally, *Salafi manhaj* is less accommodating to the socio-cultural conditions of the community, so it often triggers social conflicts. However, PPICB shows a somewhat different attitude, so it is categorized into the cooperative Salafi-purist type. In line with the "puristic" attitude, PPICBB is not accommodating to the traditions of the surrounding community that it considers to be heretical, such as *tahlilan* or gathering forum to repeat *lâ ilâha illallâh* (Interview). However, PPICBB still respects that tradition and can establish good cooperation in implementing various social activities. In addition, PPICBB also voices the principle of compliance with the legitimate government.

Geographically, the location of PPICBB can be considered "unique" because it is in the middle of the community's life, some of which are affiliated with Muhammadiyah and partly with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). The north of PPICBB is inhabited by community members who are generally affiliated with Muhammadiyah, whilst the south side is inhabited by community members who are usually affiliated with NU. Amid this plurality, PPICBB has succeeded in building harmony in living together through cooperation with all levels of society, including the local government. Therefore, PPICBB objected if it was called an exclusive *pesantren*, considering it has been proven to be able to blend in with the broader community in carrying out community service activities, organizing

elections, assigning students to teach at TPA (the elementary institution for teaching Quran) in the surrounding environment, condolences, breaking the fast together, and others (*Interview & Observation*). The establishment of STIT Madani Yogyakarta started from the idea of the urgency of integrated Islamic education from the pre-school level to the university level within PPICBB.

PAI Curriculum of STIT Madani

In the context of this study, the PAI curriculum can contain the meaning of (1) the PAI curriculum is mainly related to Islamic studies or Islamic religious science courses in the PAI study program, (2) learning activities both in the classroom and outside the classroom as a realization of efforts to achieve curricular goals, namely the achieved competence of subject course/the achieved competence of graduates of the study program. Implementing the PAI curriculum can include instructional, operational, and experiential activities. The form of instructional activities is the realization of the formal curriculum into the learning design in the classroom, such as *Rencana Pembelajaran Semester* (Semester Lesson Plan), learning materials, and media. The form of operational activities is the actualization of instructional designs into the learning process in the classroom. Meanwhile, experiential activities are the learning experiences obtained by students participating in various curricular programs, both in and outside the classroom. As a study program, PAI has a curriculum document that serves as a reference in implementing various curricular activities.

STIT Madani opened two study programs: PAI and Pendidikan Bahasa Arab/PBA (Arabic Language Education). As a PTP, the integration of higher education institutions and *pesantren* is not only realized through the policy that all students are required to live in the *pesantren* dormitories, the synergy of campus activities and *pesantren* activities, and an integrated management system, but also through the design of the curriculum, as shown in the following curriculum structure.

Table 1. PAI Curriculum of STIT Madani

No.	Code of Courses	Name of Courses	Code of Courses	Name of Courses
1.	National 001	Pancasila Education	PPAI 006	Media and Technology of PAI
2.	National 002	Civic Education	PPAI 021	Psychology of Learning
3.	National 003	Basic Indonesian Language	PPAI 014	Administration of Islamic Education
4.	National 004	Basic English	PPAI 010	Curriculum Development of PAI
5.	STITMA 001	Philosophy of Islamic Jurisprudence (<i>Ushul Fiqh</i>)	PLPAI 007	Education for Anti-Corruption
6.	STITMA 002	Quranic Studies	STITMA 012	Computer Science

7.	STITMA 003	Basic Arabic	PPAI 009	The Evaluation System of PAI
8.	STITMA 005	Hadith Studies	PPAI 015	Research Methods of PAI
9.	National 006	Introduction to Islamic Studies	PPAI 016	Statistics of Education
10.	STITMA 004	Tahsin Al-Qur'an (Improvement of the Qur'an)	PPAI 018	Education for Entrepreneurship
11.	STITMA 007	Manhaj Ahlussunnah (Sunnite Methods)	PPAI 022	Models of PAI in Madrasahs/Schools
12.	STITMA 008	Islamic Education Science	PLPAI 010	Research on Islamic Texts
13.	STITMA 011	Sunnite Morality	STITMA 009	Islamic Psychology
14.	PPAI 013	Quranic Verses & Hadith on Education	PPAI 004	Islamic Education Management
15.	PPAI 020	Basic Natural Science	PPAI 007	Islamic Guidance and Counseling
16.	PLPAI 006	Educator's Personality	PPAI 008	Selected Issues on PAI
17.	National 006	Islamic Educational Thought	PPAI 011	Islamic Jurisprudence on Rituals
18.	STITMA 008	Memorizing Al-Quran	PPAI 017	Sociology of Education
19.	STITMA 010	History of Islamic Education	PPAI 019	Psychology of Education
20.	PPAI 001	Indonesian Language for Advance	PPAI 023	Microteaching
21.	PPAI 002	English for Advance	PLPAI 003	Academic Writing
22.	PPAI 003	Arabic for Advance	PPAI 024	Practice for Teaching in the Classroom
23.	PLPAI 009	Character Education	PPAI 025	Practice for Social Service
24.	PPAI 005	Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning Strategies and Methods	PPAI 026	Bachelor's Thesis
25.	PPAI 012	Islamic Jurisprudence on Public Issues		

Source: Document of Curriculum Structure of PAI Program, STIT Madani Yogyakarta

Based on that curriculum structure, PPICBB's ideology can be strengthened in the programming Course of the Sunni-Salafi worldview (*Manhaj Ahl al-Sunnah*) and the Course of the Sunni-Salafi Moral. Even though it is a Salafi system or worldview, STIT Madani programs the Course of Pancasila and the Course of Citizenship or Civic education, which are needed to strengthen the national commitment of students. That is in line with the Salafi *manhaj* chosen, namely moderate non-Jihadi Salafi, as stated in the mission of the study program, "to provide Islamic and Salaf-oriented education."

Discussion

Pro-moderation in PAI Curriculum

The above curriculum structure is a translation of one of the institutional goals of STIT Madani, which wants to realize religious moderation in pesantren based on the values of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah (Sunni-Salafi Ideology), such as moderation and mutual affection. These values have encouraged a shift in PPICB's approach through STIT Madani in articulating its Salafism. The existence of various formal educational institutions from pre-school to higher education institutions and the presence of several teachers and lecturers from outside have produced an open intellectual-religious climate, even boldly declared as a pro-moderation campus.

Regarded from the structure of its components, the STIT Madani curriculum consists of a national curriculum, faculty or institutional curriculum, and study programs. Religious moderation is included in the faculty/institution curriculum (*Interview*) in that context. This shows that the development of religious moderation has become a *concern* of this college, which he described in institutional and instructional activities, not only in the PAI study program, but also in the PBA study program. It is recognized that STIT Madani is a *pesantren* college affiliated with Salafism, but its Salafi ideology is moderate as revealed in the informant's statement,

"Salafisme tidak semuanya bermazhab Hanbali. Ada pesantren salafi yang bermazhab Hanbali dan ada juga pesantren salafi yang bermazhab Syafi'i. Karena itu, tidak aneh apabila terdapat pesantren salafi yang mempraktikkan qunut dalam shalat Subuh dan ketika khutbah Jumat, khatib pun memakai tongkat. Masjid PPICBB memang menganut mazhab Hanbali, akan tetapi juga mempersilahkan bagi penganut mazhab Syafi'i. Di masjid ini, ada penganut mazhab Hanbali dan mazhab Syafi'i. Maka dari itu, Ustaz Reza dari Yaman yang bermazhab Syafi'i dan Ustaz Abu Nida yang bermazhab Hanbali tidak bermusuhan, mengingat keduanya memiliki prinsip terkait hal-hal cabang (*furu'iyah*); kami perlu bertoleransi" (*Interview*).

This interview data strengthens the practice of tolerance in responding to differences (*khilafiyah*), which is part of the discussion of the material in the Course of Akhlak Ahlus Sunnah (Sunnite Ethics). Along with the joining of several lecturers from Yemen and graduates of other universities, the practice of mazhab (school) on campus feels more colorful: there are Hanabilah and Syafi'iyah. The learning material, both in and outside the classroom, also feels the same. This kind of practice is possible because the Salafism model that is adhered to is moderate (Wahid, 2014; Irham, 2016).

The curriculum structure does not contain courses on Philosophy, such as Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Education, or its derivative sciences, considering that philosophy, in the view

of Salafi manhaj, is indeed considered very dangerous because it can cause damage to Muslims' understanding of their religious teachings. The principal reason is that the birthplace of philosophy is Greece, a land of non-believers, and Philosophy does not exist in the generation of *Salaf al-Ummah*. Thus, philosophy is a strange thought outside of Islam and Muslims. Therefore, suspicion of the output of philosophy must be put forward. Only the *ahl al-ahwâ wa al-bida'* have adopted the philosophy to be used as a supporting tool to explore the Islamic faith. Indeed, this narrative is not explicitly and directly obtained by researchers from the field, but rather as an analysis of one of the contexts of STIT Madani Yogyakarta curriculum development, namely the ideological context.

Even though puritanical, STIT Madani declares itself a “pro-moderation” campus. Many efforts to instill and cultivate the values of religious moderation are carried out through various approaches (*Interview*). One of them is through an instructional approach that integrates the values of religious moderation into the learning process in the classroom, including PAI learning, such as the Course of Fiqh/Ushul Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) (Muizzuddin et al., 2026). It was explained in *the interview*, in line with the rules of *al-'âdah muhakkamah*, that accommodation for the traditions of the local community is very needed while not contradicting the basic teachings of Islam. The lecturers from Yemen who teach on the campus of STIT Madani also emphasized that students should know the Syafi'iyyah school, considering that the majority of Muslim communities in Indonesia adhere to this school (*Interview & Observation*).

It means that being accommodating to local culture as part of the value of religious moderation teaches the need to practice religiosity that *is not alienated* from the religious traditions of the local community. On that basis, it is appropriate that purist attitudes do not necessarily lead to exclusive and intolerant tendencies (Isnaeniah et al., 2026), let alone radicals. In such a context, *the inclusion-moderation theory* that (Tallmeister, 2013) Once proposed, it is interesting for analysis. According to this theory, the ideology of moderation is a rational choice of various Islamic movements as a step *to reinvent* their identity to appear as a democratic movement. With pro-moderation, despite the *Salafi manhaj*, the articulation of Puritan attitudes is manifested through a cooperative tendency towards the traditions of the local community, local government policies, and religious schools of the majority of Muslims. *Salafi manhaj* in Indonesia can be classified into three types: Salafi purism, Salafi haraki (activism), and Salafi jihadi (Jihadism) (Krismono, 2017; Iqbal, 2019).

That is a “rational” choice that is in line with the demands of the principle of religious moderation while also taking a conviction of rejecting *exclusion-radicalization*. The strong reaction of the local community to the spread of the “hard” Salafi ideology, as outlined in the articles Hasan (2018) and Saparudin (2017), which took place in several regions, is one of the main factors in the lack of success of Salafism in gaining widespread sympathy from the public, so it is required to change its approach to missionary endeavor (Maharani, 2025). Not only due to external factors, but the ideological dynamics of Salafism towards moderate views are also driven by internal factors, namely, contestation among Salafist groups in achieving public support (Irham, 2016; Yakin, 2018), so that it is necessary to make various adaptations, such as accepting current issues like democracy, religious moderation, and the Republic of Indonesia (Tabroni & Idham, 2023).

Developing Religious Moderation through the PAI Curriculum

For many people, the existence of moderate Salafism seems to be still considered odd, considering that they have identified Salafism with intolerance and violence so far, and there are even often clashes between moderate Islam and the Salafi movement (Febriansyah & El-Alami, 2021). Despite adhering to conservative religious views, such as banning music and philosophy, moderate Salafists do not impose their views on others, especially if they are still related to disputable issues (*khilâfiyah*). Here, the relevance of (Moreno, 2017) signals that in the latest development, the interpretation of Salafi ranges from a personal religious view that emphasizes the purification of life beliefs to a jihadi-oriented religious view. Ustaz Abu Nida's interaction with several religious leaders in Yogyakarta, such as Prof. Machasin and Dr. A. Malik Madani from MUI and NU, the presence of lectures from Yemen affiliated with the Syafi'iyah school in PPICBB, and the recruitment of graduate lecturers from various other universities, also coloured the development of Salafi understanding (Salafism) in STIT Madani towards moderate Salafism. This is a manifestation of inclusivity in Islamic conservatism that marks the moderate Salafi movement (Huda et al., 2023).

Starting from the *pesantren* curriculum that is open to the Syafi'iyah school and the role of *the religious scholars*, which adheres to the principle of “priority in teaching the Syafi'iyah school when the majority of the people belong to this school” (*Interview*), STIT Madani programs courses that appreciate scientific approaches in contemporary social-humanities sciences, such as Educational Sociology and Learning Psychology. Furthermore, the curriculum of this college also seeks to hone students' integrity, creativity, and independence through Anti-Corruption Education and

Entrepreneurship Education courses. In the short term, religious moderation in the STIT Madani curriculum is possible through integrating the national and local curricula, strengthening *citizenship*, appreciation of scientific approaches, and tolerance in the mazhab (religious school).

In the curriculum, PAI courses can include educational courses and Islamic courses that are the *core* of PAI science. Through a learning system that is integrated with Islamic boarding schools, STIT Madani can more freely enrich Islamic courses, as shown by field data, "*Most of the Lecturers from Yemen are in the Shafi'ite school. They teach sorogan/mulazamah (one by one method) in scientific circle/yellow book studies, such as the teaching of the yellow books: Taqrib, Safinatun Naja, and Adabul Alim wal Muta'allim by Hasyim Asyari. Those who have academic degrees are involved in teaching on campus.*" (*Interview*). There are at least two important things that are relevant to strengthening religious moderation through such learning, namely (1) Islamic courses gain enrichment in the scientific *halaqah* (circle) of *pesantren*, and (2) openness to the Shafi'ite school (mazhab). From here, the values of tolerance in mazhab are actualized through learning Islamic courses in the classroom, which is enriched by the implementation of scientific *halaqah* in Islamic boarding schools.

In addition to Islamic courses, the actualization of religious moderation is also carried out through PAI instruction and educational courses. The learning of such courses, for example, the courses of Pancasila Education, Civic Education, Anti-Corruption Education, Entrepreneurship Education, Character Education, and PAI in Madrasahs and Schools, is loaded with efforts to strengthen the values of *citizenship*, nationalism, scientific attitudes, and creativity for students. This learning is needed to realize the candidate profile of professional educators in accordance with the demands of regulations and *Sharia (Islamic) guidance*. Learning in the classroom presents the stages of the process and pedagogical components (Briska, 2008; Maarif et al., 2022).

The stages of the pedagogical process include introducing and understanding moderation values, positive students' responses to the elaboration of moderation values and their discussions, and assessment of students' learning outcomes regarding religious moderation. Meanwhile, the pedagogical component includes at least materials, media, and learning methods/strategies in Islamic and educational courses. Viewed from the strengthening of religious moderation, the process stages and pedagogical components facilitate the implementation of the integration of moderation value content into relevant learning materials, the optimization of learning approaches that encourage critical-open reasoning, and at the same time, the organization of specific activities

for scientific deepening and strengthening student moderation nodes.

Extra-Curricular Activities Outside of the Classroom

One of the demands of the curriculum is the implementation of field experience practice activities or apprenticeships (PPL) for every student. That activity is carried out in school/madrasah educational institutions under the *at-Turots al-Islami* Foundation and in partner educational institutions, both public and private (*Interview & Observation*). Consequently, students participating in PPL must be ready to “get off” their Salafi beliefs to prevent the emergence of resistance in the community of educational institutions where PPL is conducted. In addition to PPL, every student must also carry out Community Service (KKN), which is student-led activities in various regions in the context of implementing social service programs collectively.

As a curricular program, PPL and KKN are a locus for students to adapt to a new environment because they are different from the environmental conditions in Islamic boarding schools and campuses, including their religious practices. Therefore, students are required to have *a contextual understanding* to be able to adapt and blend in with the local community. Besides PPL and KKN, STIT Madani students are used to being sent to preach to the community, teaching TPA, doing Ramadan safaris (Ramadan tours), and doing routine social service work with local community members (*Interview*). Those various curricular activities can be seen as a strategy to gain wider social acceptance (Wafi et al., 2025), as well as to maintain the sustainability of STIT Madani's Salafism.

Several achievements by students in various sports championships, such as futsal, badminton, and Javanese karate (*pencak silat*), show that STIT Madani's extracurricular activities are open because they are willing to pursue “modern” and “traditional” sports. Championships in sports will show many positive values, such as the importance of sportsmanship in competitions, physical fitness, mental and spiritual health, and cohesiveness in teamwork. That is part of the ethical and moral values needed to shape the character of the nation that has a firm competitive spirit (Nuryanti, 2016) & (Pradipta, 2015). Indirectly, those values also teach the urgency of the principle of balance in life, which supports the strengthening of religious moderation.

In a nutshell, as adherents of Salafism, the choice of pro-moderation and strengthening of steps that represent moderate Salafism certainly goes through stages. Starting from their open attitude towards other sects, their tolerance of the traditions of the surrounding community, their willingness to accept government regulations and policies in the implementation of the education

system, their integration of Islamic boarding schools with formal educational institutions, their empowerment of human resources from outside in the management of educational institutions, and their deployment of students for diverse community service and social engagement.

CONCLUSION

STIT Madani Yogyakarta organizes an integrated education system with *pesantren*, not only in management aspects but also in curriculum ones. Therefore, when the vision-mission and ideology of *pesantren* support moderation (pro-moderation), the actualization of the PTP curriculum also strengthens religious moderation, especially through the PAI curriculum, instructional activities, and other curricular activities. So, there was a harmony between *curriculum-as-designed* and *curriculum-in-action* in the endorsement of strengthening religious moderation. The PAI curriculum and its actualization are the main benchmarks of STIT Madani's commitment to strengthening religious moderation. This is shown by (1) the existence of courses in the curriculum whose learning outcomes support the internalization of religious moderation values, (2) the implementation of the PAI curriculum in instructional activities in the classroom, and (3) the realization of the curriculum through various institutional activities outside the classroom. The synergy of institutional context and curricular-instructional activities can improve the stages of the pedagogical process and, simultaneously, stimulate the construction of students' insight that is in line with the strengthening of religious moderation. There was a long process in negotiating Salafism with environmental challenges and demands. The Salafism of PPICBB and STIT Madani encourages the actualization of religious moderation in its college from a non-jihadi view, has an "open" hanabilah school, anti-philosophy in religious issues, but still appreciates critical reasoning, and a selective attitude towards local traditions/culture.

REFERENCES

- Anwar, R. N., & Muhayati, S. (2021). Upaya Membangun Sikap Moderasi Beragama melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam pada Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi Umum. *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 12(1), 1-15.
- Arikunto, S. (2010). *Metode Penelitian*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Asrohah, H. (2011). The Dynamics of Pesantren: Responses toward Modernity and Mechanism in Organizing Transformation. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 5(1), 66-90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2011.5.1.66-90>.
- Azra, A. (1999). *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru*. Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu.

- Bali, M. El Iq (2017). Perguruan Tinggi Islam Berbasis Pondok Pesantren. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 1(2), 1-14. <http://ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/al-tanzim/article/view/109>
- Basith, F. A., Purwandi, A. D., & Aziz, M.R. (2026). Spiritualism Types and Implications of Saudi Arabian Cultural Transmission of Religious Moderation in Indonesia. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme*, 8(1), 515-539. <https://ejournal.insuriponorogo.ac.id/index.php/scaffolding/article/view/8642>
- Briska, I. (2008). Development of Students' Values in Pedagogical Process. *Signum Temporis*, 1(1), 78-88. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10195-011-0010-0>
- Bruinessen, M. (1995). *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat*. Bandung: Mizan.
- Darmadji, A. (2011). Pondok Pesantren dan deradikalisasi Islam di Indonesia. *Millah: Jurnal Studi Agama*, 12(1), 235-252. <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol11.iss1.art12>
- Derajat, A. Z., & Syafiqurrahman, S. (2025). Moderate Islam vis a vis Salafism: Ideological Competition and Power Struggle in West Nusa Tenggara. *Jurnal Dialog*, 48(1), 130-145. <https://doi.org/10.47655/dialog.v48i1.999>.
- Febriansyah, D., & El-Alami, D. S. (2021). Moderate Islam vis-à-vis Salafism in Indonesia: An Ideological Competition. *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial-Keagamaan*, 29(1), 55-78. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.29.1.7212>
- Hasan, N. (2018). Transnational Islam, Violent Activism, and Cultural Resistance. London: Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia.
- Huda, M. Q., Sulaeman, M., & Marpuah, S. (2023). Inclusivity in Islamic Conservatism: The Moderate Salafi Movement in Kediri, Indonesia. *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama- Agama dan Lintas Budaya*, 7(1), 77-92. <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v7i1.22648>
- Iqbal, A. M. (2019). *Internet dan Gerakan Salafi di Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian Awal*. Yogyakarta: Diandra Kreatif.
- Irham, I. (2016). Pesantren Manhaj Salafi: Pendidikan Islam Model Baru di Indonesia. *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 17(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v17i1.3252>
- Isbah, M. F. (2020). Pesantren in the Changing Indonesian Context: History and Current Developments. *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies (QIJIS)*, 8(1), 65-106. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i1.5629>
- Isnaeniah, E., Nisa, F. K., & Ihyana, F. A. (2026). Religious Moderation in the Perspective of Religious Community Organizations of Persatuan Islam (PERSIS). *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme*, 8(1), 1-14.
- Jamhari & J. Jahroni. (2004). *Gerakan salafi radikal di Indonesia*. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Kamal, M. Z., & Effendi, A. (2026). Inovasi Transformasi Pesantren Melalui Pendirian Perguruan Tinggi. *Tafhim Al-'Ilmi: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam*, 17(2), 405-418. <https://jurnal.stitau.ac.id/index.php/tafhim/article/view/374>
- Kasdi, A. (2019). Wasathiyah Islam as the Road to Moderatism in Indonesia. *Al-Albab*, 8(2), 179-192. <https://doi.org/10.24260/alalbab.v8i2.1356>
- Krismono, K. (2017). Salafisme di Indonesia: Ideologi, Politik Negara, Dan Fragmentasi. *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 16(2), 173-202. <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol16.iss2.art2>
- Maarif, M. A., Rofiq, M. H., & Sirojuddin, A. (2022). Implementing Learning Strategies for Moderate Islamic Religious Education in Islamic Higher Education. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7(1), 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v8i1.19037>
- Maharani, M. D. (2025). Salafism in Indonesia: Ideology, Identity, and Politics. *Islamic Thought Review*, 3(1), 1-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30983/itr.v3i1.9352>
- Majid, N. (1997). *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren: Sebuah Potret Perjalanan*. Jakarta: Paramadina.

- Makruf, J., & Asrori, S. (2022). The Making of Salafi-Based Islamic Schools in Indonesia. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 60(1), 227-264. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2022.601.227-264>
- Moleong, L. J. (2013). *Metodologi Kualitatif*. Edition III. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Moreno, J. C. A. (2017). Salafism: From a Religious Movement to a Political Force. *Revista de Estudios en Seguridad Internacional*, 3(1), 11-41. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18847/1.5.2>
- Muizzuddin, M., Masyhudi, H., & Sari, N. S. (2026). Islamic Moderation as an Approach to Fiqh Learning at Pesantren. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme*, 8(1), 64-81. <https://ejournal.insuriponorogo.ac.id/index.php/scaffolding/article/view/8333>
- Mujahid, I. (2021). Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education: Creating Moderate Muslims in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 11(2), 185-212. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.185-212>
- Muthmainnah, S., Bachtiar, F., Yassin, A., & Sulistyowati, E. (2025). Islamic Education Development Prospects: Study of the Future and Its Challenges. *Jurnal Pendidikan Progresif*, 15(03), 1604-1619. <https://doi.org/10.23960/jpp.v15i3.pp1604-1919>
- Nuryanti, N. (2016). Peranan Nilai Sportifitas Pendidikan Jasmani dalam Menghadapi Masyarakat Ekonomi ASEAN. *Proceedings of National Seminar*, 2(1), 777-896.
- Pradipta, G. D. (2015). Sportivitas dalam Keolahragaan sebagai Bagian Pembentukan Generasi Muda dan Nasionalisme. *Civis: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan*, 5(1), 713-724. <https://journal.upgris.ac.id/index.php/civis/article/view/632>
- Saparudin, S. (2017). Salafism, State Recognition and Local Tension: New Trends in Islamic Education in Lombok. *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 21(1), 81-107. <https://ulumuna.or.id/index.php/ujs/article/view/68/60>
- Sarantakos, S. (2017). *Social Research*, edition III. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Sholeh, B. (2007). *Budaya Damai Komunitas Pesantren*. Jakarta: LP3ES.
- Sindhunata, P. (2000). *Menggagas Paradigma Baru Pendidikan*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Sultoni, A., Nasih, A. M., ThoriquTTYas, T., & Yani, A. (2026). Strategies to Strengthen Religious Moderation in Universities. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme*, 8(2), 19-37.
- Tabroni, R., & Idham, I. (2023). From Radical Labels to Moderate Islam: The Transformation of the Salafism Movement in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal and Muslim Societies*, 13(2), 279-306. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v13i2.279-306>
- Tallmeister, J. (2013). The ideological moderation of Islamist movements. *E-International Relations*, 1-6. <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/07/25/the-ideological-moderation-of-islamist-movements/>
- Umar, H. N. (2014). *Rethinking Pesantren*. Jakarta: PT Elex Media.
- Wafi, M. H., Hidayati, M., Usman, S., & Jubba, H. (2025). Salafism and Religious Moderation: Reinterpreting Salafi Citizenship. *Jurnal Ushuluddin*, 33(1), 204-221. <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v33i1.36423>
- Wahid, D. (2014). Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A study of Salafi pesantren in Contemporary Indonesia. *Wacana*, 15(2), 367-376. <https://doi.org/10.17510/wacana.v15i2.413>
- Wirian, O., Nasution, H. B., & al-Farabi, M. (2026). Implementation of Religious Moderation in Higher Education. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme*, 7(2), 304-315.
- Yakin, A. U. (2018). Salafi Dakwah and the Dissemination of Puritanism in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Radio Rodja. *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 22(2), 205-236. <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v22i2.335>