

Strengthening Religious Moderation Based on Majelis Taklim Through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) Approach in a Semi-Urban Environment

Syahril Siddik^{1✉}, Ahmad Yuzki Arifian Nawafi², Didin Wahyudin³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung

✉¹syahril.siddik@uinsatu.ac.id, ²ahmad_nawafi@uinsatu.ac.id, ³didinwahyudin@uinsatu.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening religious moderation in semi-urban communities is increasingly important in maintaining social harmony amid plurality. This community service research aims to describe the process and results of mentoring religious moderation values based on the Ar-Royan Tunggulsari Tulungagung Mosque Council. The approach used is Participatory Action Research (PAR) with the KUPAR (Know–Understand–Plan–Action–Reflection) cycle involving active congregations, mosque administrators, and the local community. Data were collected through participatory observation, group discussions, reflective interviews, and activity documentation. The findings show that the guidance succeeded in reconstructing the congregation's understanding of religious moderation from a normative to a conceptual concept, increasing sensitivity to diversity, and changing social interaction patterns to be more dialogical and inclusive. This transformation also had an impact on strengthening internal solidarity and social cohesion that was more adaptive to the dynamics of heterogeneity in the residential environment. These findings indicate that majelis taklim has the potential to become a space for practicing religious moderation through a deliberative participatory approach. The practical implication of this community service is a model for strengthening moderation that can be replicated in similar communities to encourage harmony and cross-group cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION

The discourse on religious moderation in the last decade has become one of the strategic agendas in socio-religious development in Indonesia. Amidst increasing identity polarization, religious conservatism, and symptoms of religious intolerance, religious moderation is positioned as a normative and practical approach to maintaining social cohesion in a pluralistic society.^{1,2} This concept does not merely refer to a theological "middle ground" but also reflects a commitment to nationality, respect for diversity, rejection of violence, and openness to local culture as part of contextual religious practice.

In the Indonesian context, the strengthening of religious moderation is systematically promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia through various policies, including the integration of religious moderation in formal and non-formal education. Religious moderation is defined as a balanced, fair, and non-extreme way of viewing, attitude, and practice of religion.³ Four main indicators national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodating local culture have been formulated as operational parameters for measuring the level of moderation in society. Thus, religious moderation is not only conceptual but also has concrete social and political implications in maintaining national stability and harmony.

Theologically, religious moderation has a strong foundation in the concept of wasathiyyah in Islam. The Qur'an refers to Muslims as ummatan wasatan (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 143), which is normatively understood as a community that is fair, proportional, and avoids extremism. This principle emphasizes that ideal religiousness is not exclusive and rigid, but rather inclusive and contextual. In the perspective of Islamic education, the values of wasathiyyah can be internalized through formal and non-formal educational institutions that are oriented towards the formation of moderate character.⁴

One non-formal religious institution that has a strategic position in the transmission of Islamic values is the majelis taklim. Sociologically, majelis taklim functions as a space for religious learning, strengthening spirituality, and forming religious social networks.⁵ In many local contexts, majelis taklim is not only a forum for regular recitation, but also acts as an agent of social, economic, and cultural transformation. Research by Munawaroh and Zaman shows that majelis taklim can improve religious

¹ Salminawati Salminawati et al., "Moderasi Beragama Di Indonesia: Membangun Toleransi & Kerukunan Dalam Masyarakat Pluralis," *Book Chapter of Proceedings Journey-Liaison Academia and Society* 1, no. 1 (2024), <https://scholar.google.com/scholar?cluster=5332112288112514800&hl=en&oi=scholar>.

² Ahmad Shofi Muhyiddin, "Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama Melalui Majelis Taklim Di Kecamatan Jambu Kabupaten Semarang," *Community Development: Jurnal Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 6, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.21043/cdjpmi.v6i1.15123>.

³ Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

⁴ Mukti Ali and Firmansyah, "Konsep Implementasi Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Melalui Tripusat Pendidikan," *Al-I'tibar: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (February 2023), <https://doi.org/10.30599/jpia.v10i1.2122>.

⁵ Triana Rosalina Noor, Isna Nurul Inayati, and Maskuri Bakri, "Majelis Taklim Sebagai Transformator Pendidikan, Ekonomi Dan Sosial Budaya Pada Komunitas Muslimah Urban," *Tarbiyatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 1 (2021).

understanding while strengthening the social solidarity of the congregation.⁶ Meanwhile, Zakiyah asserts that women's majelis taklim in Yogyakarta contribute to shaping the religious character of the Muslim middle class, which is relatively moderate and adaptive to social change.⁷

However, most previous studies tend to treat majelis taklim as objects of descriptive research, focusing on their general roles and functions. There has not been much research that develops participatory intervention models to systematically strengthen the values of religious moderation within the structure of majelis taklim.⁸ In fact, in the context of a socially and religiously heterogeneous society, a participatory approach is crucial so that the internalization of values is not top-down, but rather arises from the collective reflection of the community itself.⁹

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach offers a methodological framework relevant to this goal. PAR emphasizes the active involvement of the community in the entire research cycle from problem identification, action planning, implementation, to reflection.¹⁰ In the context of Islamic studies, this approach allows for the integration of the normative dimensions of religious teachings and the social practices of the community in a dialogical manner. Through a continuous cycle of reflection, the values of moderation are not only understood cognitively but also internalized through collective experience.

Based on this conceptual framework, this article examines the mentoring of religious moderation values based on majelis taklim at the Ar-Royan Tunggul Sari Tulungagung Mosque (See Picture 1). This majelis taklim is located in a residential area that is relatively heterogeneous in terms of socio-religious diversity, making it a strategic space for building inclusive and harmonious religious practices. This study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) how is the process of religious moderation guidance based on majelis taklim implemented through the PAR approach; (2) what are the results and reflective dynamics that emerge during the guidance process; and (3) how can this model be constructed as a framework for strengthening community-based religious moderation?

⁶ Munawaroh Munawaroh and Badrus Zaman, "Peran Majelis Taklim dalam Meningkatkan Pemahaman Keagamaan Masyarakat," *Jurnal Penelitian* 14, no. 2 (December 2020), <https://doi.org/10.21043/jp.v14i2.7836>.

⁷ Zakiyah Zakiyah, "Moderasi Beragama Masyarakat Menengah Muslim: Studi Terhadap Majelis Taklim Perempuan Di Yogyakarta," *Harmoni* 18, no. 2 (December 2019), <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v18i2.392>.

⁸ Irma Suryani Siregar and Rohman Rohman, "Penguatan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama Dalam Majelis Taklim Di Kota Panyabungan," *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 20, no. 2 (December 2023), [https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2023.vol20\(2\).13488](https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2023.vol20(2).13488).

⁹ Solechan, "Pengajian Sabilussalam Dan Perannya Dalam Meningkatkan Spiritualitas Dan Moderasi Beragama Umat," *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 13, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.54437/urwatulwutsqo.v13i1.1422>.

¹⁰ Stephen Kemmis, Robin McTaggart, and Rhonda Nixon, *The Action Research Planner: Doing Critical Participatory Action Research* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2013).



Picture 1. Map of Bumi Mas Housing Complex

Theoretically, this article contributes to the development of Islamic community development studies by offering an integrative model between the concepts of religious moderation, majelis taklim institutions, and participatory approaches. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for strengthening religious moderation at the grassroots level through non-formal religious institutions.

Academically, this article contributes in three ways. First, it shifts the discourse on religious moderation from a normative-policy framework to a community-based praxis model. Second, it offers a reflective-participatory model through the KUPAR cycle in the PAR approach as a strategy for internalizing the values of moderation. Third, it presents the context of majelis taklim in a heterogeneous community as a social laboratory for strengthening religious harmony. Thus, this article does not merely describe the role of majelis taklim, but constructs an operational model for strengthening religious moderation that is applicable and replicable.

METHOD OF SERVICE

Research Design

This community service activity uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) as its main methodological framework. PAR was chosen because it places the community as an active subject in the process of social change, rather than merely an object of intervention. This approach emphasizes a reflective cycle that includes problem identification, action planning, implementation, and participatory evaluation.¹¹ In the context of strengthening religious moderation, PAR enables the internalization of values through collective dialogue and shared reflection, so that the changes that occur are organic and sustainable. Practically, the PAR approach in this activity was developed through the KUPAR (Know–Understand–

¹¹ Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon, *The Action Research Planner*.

Plan–Action–Reflection) cycle model, which was adapted to the characteristics of the majelis taklim community as a non-formal Islamic education space.

Location and Community

The community service activity took place at the Ar-Royan Mosque Islamic Council, Tunggulsari Village, Tulungagung Regency, East Java (see Picture 2). The Ar-Royan Mosque is located in the Bumi Mas Housing Complex, which has a semi-urban social character with a relatively heterogeneous socio-religious background. Although the majority of the population is Muslim, there are also non-Muslim residents living side by side in the same environment. The objects of the community service activities are:

1. Active members of the Majelis Taklim (approximately 40–50 people)
2. Mosque administrators
3. Ustadz/regular preachers
4. The community surrounding the mosque as an indirect impact of the program

These objects were selected based on the consideration that the Majelis Taklim is a strategic space in the process of transmitting religious values and shaping the social attitudes of the congregation.



Picture 2. Masjid Ar-Royan Perumahan Bumi Mas Tulungagung

Procedure

The activities were carried out systematically through five main stages in the KUPAR cycle, which took place during the mentoring period.

1. To Know (Initial Mapping and Social Identification)

The initial stage focused on mapping the socio-religious conditions of the congregation. The activities carried out included participatory observation of regular religious study activities, informal dialogues with administrators and congregants, identification of patterns of religious understanding and internal social dynamics, and mapping of needs and challenges related to religious moderation

This stage aims to obtain an initial picture of the level of understanding of religious moderation and the social potential of the community.

2. To Understand (Problem Analysis and Formulation)

At this stage, a reflective analysis is conducted with the administrators and congregation regarding their understanding of tolerance and diversity, their perceptions of current religious issues, and internal and external challenges in maintaining social harmony. Small group discussions are used to explore the congregation's perspectives in greater depth. This stage results in the formulation of contextual needs for strengthening the values of moderation.

3. To Plan (Planning the Assistance Program)

Based on the results of the previous stage's analysis, the team and the administrators develop a strategy for strengthening religious moderation through integrating moderation material into regular religious lectures, developing study themes based on four indicators of religious moderation (national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodating local culture), designing interactive discussion forums, and planning educational activities for children and adolescents. Planning is carried out collaboratively to ensure the relevance and acceptability of the program.

4. To Action (Program Implementation)

The implementation stage includes thematic Lectures on religious moderation, the material is delivered in a *majelis taklim* forum using a dialogical approach, rather than a monological one, interactive discussions and reflections on current issues, congregations are invited to discuss socio-religious issues openly and argumentatively, internalization of values through social practice, strengthening solidarity and togetherness through joint social activities, education on moderation for the younger generation, and delivery of simple material on tolerance and togetherness. This stage emphasizes the active involvement of the congregation as agents of change.

5. To Reflection (Participatory Evaluation and Reflection)

The reflection stage is carried out through evaluative discussions with administrators and congregants, identification of changes in attitudes and understanding, analysis of supporting factors and obstacles, and formulation of recommendations for program sustainability. Reflection is carried out collectively to ensure the sustainability of moderation practices in regular *majelis taklim* activities.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was obtained through participatory observation, reflective interviews, group discussions, and documentation of activities. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using a reflective-thematic approach. The analysis process was carried out simultaneously throughout the cycle, so that the results of each stage of reflection became the basis for action in the next stage. Triangulation of sources and methods was used to increase the validity of the findings. The community service activities were carried out with the approval of the *majelis taklim* administrators and the voluntary participation of the congregation. The entire assistance process emphasized the principles of respect for local values, openness to dialogue, and non-domination in interactions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bumi Mas Housing Complex is located in a strategic landscape in the middle of Tulungagung regency, specifically belonging to Tunggulsari village. It is part of Bumi Mas Wahyu (BMW) Housing in Tulungagung was established in 2010 and has grown to become one of the leading property developers in East Java. The company focuses on subsidized and commercial housing with more than 40 projects spread across 6 districts, including Tulungagung, and is well-known for its complete legality. BMW Housing is known as a developer that consistently provides decent housing with complete legality, making it one of the leading subsidized housing developers in the region.

Tunggulsari Village area is located at an altitude of ± 85 m above sea level, 3 km east of Tulungagung city and 4 km southwest of Kedungwaru subdistrict. Tunggulsari Village, with an area of 147.72 hectares, is divided into three hamlets, namely Sekarsari Hamlet, Mekarsari Hamlet, and Summersari Hamlet. Located across the inter-district road connecting the city and Ngunut via Pulosari, Tunggulsari Village has the potential to be developed as a communal residential area, such as a housing complex. Unsurprisingly, at least five housing complexes have been built. In addition, the village's relatively flat and fertile topography, with a river winding through the center of the village, has the potential for agricultural development and good agricultural productivity. Land use patterns in Tunggulsari Village are dominated by food crops and horticulture, namely sugar cane, rice, corn, and others. In addition, Tunggulsari Village is also supported by elementary school education facilities and health facilities in the form of a village health center (PUSKESDES), which greatly helps the community in obtaining health services. However, this does not mean that there are no social problems such as poverty, unemployment, and juvenile delinquency in Tunggulsari Village. The village's potential has not been maximized due to inadequate infrastructure and untapped human resources.

Based on gender, the population of Tunggulsari Village consists of 3 (three) hamlets, namely Sekarsari Hamlet with a population of 1082 males -Male (M) 1,082 people, female (F) 1,114 people; Mekarsari Hamlet with male population (M) 983 people, female 1,010 people; Summersari Hamlet with male population (M) 882 people, female 918 people. The total population is 2,947 males (M) and 3,042 females (F). Based on age groups, the details are as follows: age (0-5) years, males 293 people, females 307 people; age (5-10) years, males 364 people, females 372 people; age (10-15) years old, males 508 and females 524, (15-30) years old, males 732 and females 741, (30-45) years old, males 705 and females 725. For the age group (45-60) years, there are 345 males and 373 females. Based on the birth, death, and migration rates of the population from the three hamlets, Sekarsari Hamlet has the highest figures, with Births – Deaths – Migration at 34 – 15 – 13, followed by Mekarsari at 26 – 10 – 12, and Summersari at 23 – 10 – 8 people. Based on the social conditions and developments as well as public facilities in the village, the population by gender is 2,947 males and 3,042 females. Of this number, 1,780 are farmers, 799 are farm workers, 178 are civil servants, 229 are craftsmen, 74 are members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces/Indonesian National Police, and 59 are traders. In terms of education level, 645 people are elementary school graduates and 54 are bachelor's degree graduates. Based on religion and belief, 5,396

people are Muslim.

Conditions of Religious Diversity and the Social Structure of the Majelis Taklim

Initial mapping results show that the congregation of the Ar-Royan Mosque Majelis Taklim has a relatively high level of religious participation, marked by consistent attendance at weekly and monthly recitations (see Picture 3). However, their understanding of the concept of religious moderation is still implicit and normative. Members generally interpret moderation as "not being excessive" in their religious practices, but have not yet systematically linked it to indicators such as national commitment, anti-violence, or accommodating local culture. Socially, this community has strong social capital, especially in the form of internal solidarity and kinship networks among congregations. This social capital is an important foundation in the process of internalizing values, because fluid interactions and relatively egalitarian relationships facilitate the process of reflective dialogue. Thus, the initial conditions show the potential for transformation, although there is not yet a structured conceptual framework of moderation in the discourse of religious study groups.



Picture 3. Majelis Taklim Masjid Ar-Royyan Perumahan Bumi Mas

The results of the study show that the Ar-Royan Mosque Majelis Taklim has a relatively solid social structure with an active congregation of between 40 and 50 people. Regular activities include weekly and monthly recitations, with a dominant one-way lecture style of delivering material. In general, the congregation's understanding of religious moderation is still at the normative-moral level. The term "moderate" is understood as an attitude of not being excessive in religion, but it has not been systematically linked to the four indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodating local culture.

In the social context, the religiously heterogeneous environment of the Bumi Mas Housing Complex is an important factor. Although relations between residents are relatively harmonious, there is no reflective forum that explicitly discusses the importance of religious moderation in the context of

interfaith neighborhood life. This indicates a need to strengthen reflective awareness of the social plurality surrounding the congregation.

Internalizing the Values of Religious Moderation

One of the main findings was a shift in the congregation's understanding from a general moral concept of moderation to a more conceptual and contextual understanding. After integrating moderation material into religious study forums and thematic discussions, the congregation began to identify four indicators of religious moderation as part of their daily religious practices. The results of the mentoring program show that the internalization of religious moderation values occurs gradually through the integration of material in religious lectures and reflective discussion forums. This process not only increases knowledge but also shifts the congregation's perspective on the relationship between religion and social life.

These cognitive changes are seen in three aspects:

1. Expanding the Meaning of Tolerance

Tolerance is no longer understood simply as "not interfering," but as a willingness to respect and actively coexist in a heterogeneous social environment. Discussions about the relationship between Islam and the state have led to an understanding that commitment to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and Pancasila does not conflict with Islamic teachings. The congregation has begun to see that maintaining national unity is part of religious practice. This change can be seen in the congregation's more open attitude towards national symbols and increased awareness of the need to maintain social stability in the neighborhood.

2. Strengthening National Commitment

Discussions about the relationship between religion and the state encourage congregations to view Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia not as secular entities separate from religion, but as a shared space in line with the Islamic value of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Before the mentoring program, tolerance was passively understood as "not disturbing others." After the reflective process, the meaning of tolerance developed into an active attitude of respecting and maintaining good relations with people of different religions. The congregation showed increased sensitivity to religious issues that have the potential to trigger conflict, especially in the context of social media. Discussions of actual cases helped the congregation understand the importance of verifying information and avoiding provocative narratives.

3. Anti-Violence Awareness in Religious Discourse

Congregations show increased caution in responding to provocative issues on social media and prefer a dialogical clarification approach over emotional responses. The material on the dangers of radicalism and extremism raised collective awareness that violence in the name of religion is contrary to the principle of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a blessing for the universe). Joint reflection showed that congregations became more cautious in responding to sermons or religious content that was exclusive and provocative in tone. This indicates an increase in critical religious literacy.

This transformation shows that the internalization of moderation values is more effective when linked to the concrete experiences of congregations, not just through normative transmission. Strengthened moderation is also evident in the acceptance of religious practices that intersect with local traditions as long as they do not conflict with the basic principles of Islam. Discussions about local wisdom reinforce the understanding that culture and religion can coexist harmoniously.

Affective Transformation and Social Attitudes

In addition to cognitive changes, affective dynamics were also found in the form of increased social sensitivity to issues of diversity. Collective reflection in discussion forums resulted in the realization that social harmony in heterogeneous residential environments requires a proactive attitude, not just a passive one. This change in attitude is reflected in an increased tendency for congregations to avoid exclusive speech in public forums, a shared understanding to maintain an inclusive narrative of preaching, and strengthened internal solidarity that is not exclusive to outside groups. Sociologically, these findings indicate that religious moderation in the context of majelis taklim serves as a social regulation mechanism, strengthening cohesion without erasing religious identity.

The PAR approach has brought about significant changes in the patterns of interaction within the majelis taklim. The study circle, which was previously dominated by one-way lectures, has begun to develop into a space for participatory dialogue. The congregation is no longer merely recipients of material, but are actively involved in discussion and reflection. This participation increases their sense of ownership of the religious moderation strengthening program. This change also has an impact on strengthening internal solidarity and openness to input from various congregational backgrounds. Thus, the majelis taklim is transformed into a space for religious deliberation.

Social Impact in the Housing Environment

The PAR approach through the KUPAR cycle has resulted in a change in the position of congregations from passive recipients to active participants in religious reflection. Discussion forums are no longer dominated by one-way communication, but provide space for congregations to express their experiences and views. This transformation has resulted in:

1. An increased sense of ownership of the moderation program.
2. The emergence of congregational initiatives to propose contextual religious study themes.
3. The establishment of a culture of internal dialogue within the majelis taklim.

Methodologically, these findings confirm that the internalization of moderation values is more sustainable when the community is involved as agents of change, not merely as objects of policy socialization. The results of the reflection show that strengthening religious moderation not only has an impact on the internal congregation but also on social relations in the residential environment. Several identified indicators of social impact include increased harmonious communication among residents, reduced potential for miscommunication related to religious issues, and collective awareness to maintain a friendly and inclusive image of Islam. Religious moderation in this context serves as a preventive mechanism against potential social conflict.

Construction of a Moderate Strengthening Model Based on Majelis Taklim

Based on the entire reflective process, it can be constructed that the strengthening of religious moderation based on majelis taklim works through three layers of transformation, which consist of cognitive, affective, and practical layers. The first layer covers the reconstruction of normative understanding into conceptual understanding, the second is to strengthen empathy and social sensitivity, and the last implementation of moderation values in daily social interactions. This model shows that majelis taklim can function as a space for *wasathiyyah* praxis, not just as a forum for the transmission of religious texts. In the context of a heterogeneous semi-urban society, religious moderation becomes an adaptive strategy for maintaining social stability while strengthening an inclusive religious identity.

Based on the overall results, it can be concluded that strengthening religious moderation based on majelis taklim occurs through three main layers of transformation:

1. Cognitive Transformation – increased conceptual understanding of moderation.
2. Affective Transformation – the growth of empathy and social sensitivity.
3. Practical Transformation – the implementation of moderate values in everyday life.

This model shows that majelis taklim have strategic potential as social laboratories for religious moderation at the grassroots level. In the context of a heterogeneous society, a participatory approach has proven to be more effective than a one-way normative approach.

Finally, the findings of this study indicate that the process of religious moderation guidance through a participatory approach not only results in an increase in the conceptual understanding of the congregation, but also encourages changes in attitudes and social interaction patterns that are more inclusive. The transformation that occurred reflects a shift from normative-individual religiosity to reflective and socially-oriented religiosity. This change is evident in increased sensitivity to diversity, strengthened internal solidarity, and the development of dialogue practices in responding to differences in heterogeneous semi-urban environments. These empirical findings need to be analyzed in greater depth by linking them to the theoretical framework of religious moderation, the concept of *wasathiyyah*, and international literature on social cohesion and participatory approaches, as discussed in the following section.

Discussion

Research findings show that the strengthening of religious moderation at the Ar-Royan Mosque Majelis Taklim does not stop at the normative level, but has developed into a social practice that is internalized in the patterns of interaction among the congregation. This broadens the understanding of religious moderation, which has often been positioned as a formal policy agenda, into a community-based transformation process. Conceptually, religious moderation as formulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia emphasizes four main indicators: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. However, the results of this study show that these indicators are only effective when processed through dialogical and reflective mechanisms within the community. In other words, religious moderation cannot simply be transmitted as a doctrine, but needs to be constructed as a collective social experience.

This finding is in line with Modood's argument that social cohesion in a multicultural society is not formed through the secularization of religious values, but through the inclusive reinterpretation of religion in the public sphere.¹² In the context of majelis taklim, this reinterpretation occurs through discussion and reflection that connects Islamic teachings with the social reality of heterogeneous housing. The cognitive and affective changes experienced by the congregation demonstrate the actualization of the concept of wasathiyyah as a principle of balance in Islam. Moderation in this study is not understood as a theological compromise, but rather as a form of justice and proportionality in responding to differences.

Zubaida explains that the dynamics of Islam in modern society show historical flexibility in responding to social change.¹³ In this framework, the congregation's acceptance of national and local cultural commitments shows that religious practices can adapt without losing their normative identity. This reinforces the argument that religious moderation at the community level is a form of contextualization of teachings, not secularization of religion. Furthermore, acceptance of plurality in residential environments shows that the internalization of religious moderation strengthens the ethical dimension of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin. This means that moderation not only serves to maintain internal harmony among the people but also builds constructive social relations with communities of different religions.

The results of the study, which show an increase in social sensitivity and caution in responding to religious issues, are in line with the findings of Putnam and Campbell that cross-identity interactions in religious communities contribute to increased tolerance and social cohesion.¹⁴ In the context of the Ar-Royan Majelis Taklim, reflective forums serve as spaces for the formation of "bridging social capital," which is a social network that strengthens relationships between individuals in a pluralistic society. Religious moderation here acts as a social regulatory mechanism that prevents identity-based fragmentation.

Furthermore, Saeed and Sinha emphasize that managing religious diversity requires a community-based approach that fosters collective awareness of the value of coexistence.¹⁵ The findings of this study show that such awareness grows through participatory discussions that link religious teachings to everyday social realities. Thus, religious moderation in this context is not only an individual attitude but also a social practice that strengthens environmental stability.

The shift in the congregation's interaction pattern from passive to participatory confirms the effectiveness of the PAR approach in the context of strengthening religious values. Cornwall and Jewkes emphasize that participatory research enables communities to become agents of change through collective

¹² Tariq Modood, *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), https://www.rowmaninternational.com/book/essays_on_secularism_and_multiculturalism/3-156-893a74f5-1567-4853-9bc9-3f6f6c2dfa6a.

¹³ Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁴ Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012).

¹⁵ A. Saeed and A. Sinha, "Islam and the Rule of Religious Diversity: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives," *Political Theology* 21, no. 6 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1462317X.2020.1802899>.

reflection.¹⁶ This is evident in this study, where the congregation not only received moderation material but also reconstructed their understanding through dialogue. Kemmis et al. explain that PAR works through a cycle of reflection and action that is repeated.¹⁷ The KUPAR (Know–Understand–Plan–Action–Reflection) cycle applied in this study shows consistency with this framework. The cognitive, affective, and practical transformations found indicate that value changes are more sustainable when the process is participatory. From a qualitative methodological perspective, Creswell and Poth emphasize the importance of a reflective approach in studies of social transformation.¹⁸ The results of this study reinforce the argument that the internalization of religious moderation requires a deliberative space that allows for collective negotiation of meaning.

Based on the integration of findings and theory, this study offers a conceptual model that can be referred to as mosque-based participatory religious moderation. This model combines three main dimensions:

1. Theological Dimension – wasathiyyah as a normative foundation.
2. Sociological Dimension – social cohesion and community plurality.
3. Methodological Dimension – the reflective cycle of PAR as a mechanism for internalizing values.

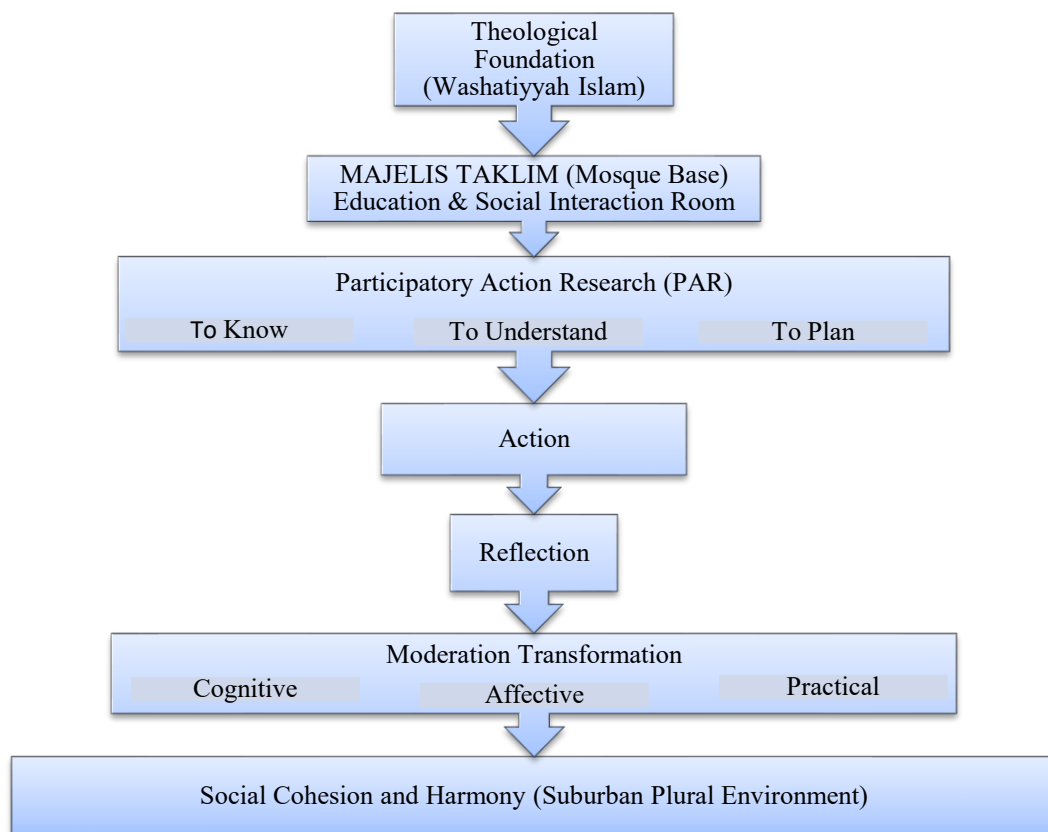
This model expands the discourse on religious moderation from merely a national policy agenda to grassroots practices based in mosques. Thus, this article contributes to the development of Islamic community development studies by positioning majelis taklim as a social laboratory for moderation.

¹⁶ Andrea Cornwall and Rachel Jewkes, "What Is Participatory Research?," *Social Science & Medicine* 41, no. 12 (December 1995), [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(95\)00127-S](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(95)00127-S).

¹⁷ Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon, *The Action Research Planner*.

¹⁸ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (California: SAGE Publications, 2007).

Figure 3. Mosque-Based Participatory Religious Moderation Model



The model in Figure 1 confirms that strengthening religious moderation based on majelis taklim is an integrative process that connects the theological foundation of wasathiyyah, participatory mechanisms through the PAR cycle, and multidimensional social transformation at the cognitive, affective, and practical levels. This model shows that the internalization of moderation does not occur instantly through doctrinal transmission, but rather through a reflective process that is repeated in a living religious social space. Thus, majelis taklim functions not only as a forum for ritual learning, but also as a deliberative arena that allows for the negotiation of meaning, the strengthening of national commitment, and the formation of social cohesion in the context of a heterogeneous society. This conceptual synthesis reinforces the theoretical contribution while providing an argumentative basis for drawing general implications formulated in the following conclusion.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that strengthening religious moderation based on majelis taklim is effective when carried out through a reflective and contextual participatory approach. Religious moderation in the context of the Ar-Royan Mosque Majelis Taklim is not only understood as a normative discourse on a "middle ground" attitude, but is internalized as a social practice reflected in cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes among the congregation. At the cognitive level, congregants experience a reconstruction of their

understanding of religious moderation from a mere general moral concept to a conceptual framework that includes national commitment, active tolerance, anti-violent attitudes, and openness to local culture. At the affective level, social sensitivity to diversity in heterogeneous residential environments has grown. Meanwhile, at the praxis level, religious moderation is manifested in more dialogical, inclusive, and deliberative patterns of interaction. These findings confirm that the internalization of religious moderation values is more effective through participatory dialogue mechanisms than through a one-way transmission approach. The application of Participatory Action Research (PAR) through the KUPAR cycle has proven capable of shifting the position of congregations from objects of preaching to subjects of collective reflection. Thus, majelis taklim not only functions as a forum for religious learning but also as a space for the production of religious meaning that is contextual and responsive to social realities.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of a mosque-based participatory religious moderation model, which integrates the principles of wasathiyyah, social cohesion, and a reflective-participatory approach. This model shows that religious moderation can grow organically from the community base, not solely through formal policy intervention. In practical forms, the results of this study indicate that strengthening religious moderation at the grassroots level requires a sustainable deliberative space, the integration of moderation material into regular recitations, and the active involvement of congregations in the reflection process. This model has the potential to be replicated in other majelis taklim, especially in heterogeneous semi-urban communities. However, this study has limitations in terms of its relatively limited community scope and its failure to use quantitative instruments to measure attitudinal changes statistically. Further research could develop a mixed-method approach to strengthen impact measurement and test the replicability of the model in different social contexts. Thus, this article emphasizes that religious moderation is not only a normative agenda of the state, but also a community-based social transformation process that can be built through majelis taklim as an inclusive and reflective space for religious practice.

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