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Social Support In Pesantren In Shaping *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity: An Analysis Based On Social Identity Theory

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menginvestigasi peran signifikan dukungan sosial di pesantren dalam membentuk identitas moderasi beragama santri di tengah meningkatnya tantangan global terhadap kerukunan beragama. Mengakui potensi pesantren dalam menumbuhkan pemahaman Islam yang seimbang, toleran, dan inklusif, penelitian ini menjawab minimnya studi kuantitatif sistematis yang menganalisis aspek multidimensional dukungan sosial—dari pendidik, teman sebaya, serta kebijakan/budaya institusi—dan dampak langsungnya terhadap identitas moderasi beragama santri, khususnya dalam kerangka Teori Identitas Sosial. Dilakukan di pesantren yang berlokasi di Karesidenan Kedu, Jawa Tengah, yang secara spesifik meliputi Kota Magelang, Kabupaten Magelang, Kabupaten Temanggung, Kabupaten Kebumen, Kabupaten Purworejo, dan Kabupaten Wonosobo, studi korelasional kuantitatif ini mengumpulkan data dari 385 santri yang telah tinggal di pesantren setidaknya satu tahun. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur melalui teknik simple random sampling dan dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Temuan penelitian secara konsisten menunjukkan bahwa semua dimensi dukungan sosial di pesantren—yaitu dukungan dari pendidik (SfE), dukungan dari teman sebaya (SfP), dan dukungan dari kebijakan dan budaya pesantren (SfPPC)—masing-masing memiliki pengaruh positif signifikan terhadap identitas moderasi beragama santri. Secara spesifik, dukungan dari teman sebaya (Beta=0.414) muncul sebagai prediktor terkuat, diikuti oleh dukungan dari kebijakan dan budaya pesantren (Beta=0.241), dan dukungan dari pendidik (Beta=0.222). Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa

ekosistem sosial komprehensif di pesantren sangat membentuk identifikasi diri santri sebagai individu moderat, keterbukaan mereka terhadap pandangan keagamaan yang beragam, dan penolakan mereka terhadap ekstremisme. Studi ini berkontribusi bukti empiris pada Teori Identitas Sosial dan memberikan implikasi praktis bagi manajemen pesantren untuk secara strategis meningkatkan mekanisme dukungan sosial ini demi menumbuhkan identitas beragama moderat yang lebih kuat di kalangan santri.

Kata Kunci: Moderasi Beragama, Pesantren, Dukungan Sosial, Identitas Sosial

Abstract

This study investigates the significant role of social support within *pesantren* in shaping *santri's* religious moderation identity amidst escalating global challenges to religious harmony. Recognizing *pesantren's* potential in fostering balanced, tolerant, and inclusive Islamic understanding, this research addresses a distinct lack of systematic quantitative studies analyzing the multi-dimensional impact of social support—from educators, peers, and institutional policies/culture—on *santri's* religious moderation identity, particularly framed by Social Identity Theory. Conducted in *pesantren* located in the Karesidenan Kedu region of Central Java, which specifically includes Magelang City, Magelang Regency, Temanggung Regency, Kebumen Regency, Purworejo Regency, and Wonosobo Regency, this quantitative correlational study collected data from 385 *santri* who have resided in *pesantren* for at least one year. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires via simple random sampling and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings consistently reveal that all dimensions of social support within *pesantren*—namely, support from educators (SfE), support from peers (SfP), and support from *pesantren* policy and culture (SfPPC)—each have a significant positive influence on *santri's* religious moderation identity. Specifically, support from peers (Beta=0.414) emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by support from *pesantren* policy and culture (Beta=0.241), and support from educators (Beta=0.222). This indicates that the comprehensive social ecosystem within *pesantren* profoundly shapes *santri's* self-identification as moderate, their openness to diverse religious views, and their rejection of extremism. The study contributes empirical evidence to Social Identity Theory and offers practical implications for *pesantren* management to strategically enhance these support mechanisms for fostering stronger moderate religious identities.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Pesantren, Social Support, Social Identity.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of religious moderation has become a central discourse in maintaining social harmony and stability in various Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia (Alvian & Ardhani, 2023; Qoumas et al., 2024). Amidst globalization and disinformation, the challenges to a balanced, tolerant, and inclusive understanding of religion are growing increasingly complex (Lewin, 2017). Extremist groups, from both the right and left, continue to spread ideologies that contradict universal humanitarian values and essential religious teachings (Kaya & Adam-Troian, 2021). In this context, the urgency of instilling a religious moderation identity in the younger generation is crucial as a defense against the infiltration of distorted religious understandings.

In Indonesia, *pesantren* have long been recognized as traditional Islamic educational institutions playing a fundamental role in shaping the moral and spiritual character of *santri* (Kawakip & Sulanam, 2023; Nurtawab & Wahyudi, 2022). More than just places for religious learning, *pesantren* are comprehensive communities that provide living environments, social interaction, and intensive guidance (Simpson et al., 2022). *Pesantren* not only teach doctrine but also shape the mindset, attitudes, and identity of *santri* through all aspects of daily life (Simpson et al., 2022; Thoyib et al., 2024). Therefore, *pesantren* possess significant and strategic potential in forming the religious moderation identity of *santri*.

Previous research on the role of *pesantren* in promoting religious moderation has generally been dominated by qualitative approaches, emphasizing normative, descriptive, and cultural aspects. Many studies focus on the role of *kiai* as central figures in conveying moderation values through their exemplary behavior and religious teachings, as well as on *pesantren* curricula that integrate topics of tolerance, anti-radicalism, and love for the homeland (Fajar, 2024; Muhtifah et al., 2021; Nuha & Hayid, 2024; Riswadi et al., 2024; Siswanto et al., 2024). Additionally, some studies highlight the culture of *musyawarah*, *bahtsul masail*, and socio-religious activities as means for learning moderate values (Huda, 2024; Khotijah et al., 2024; Lasawali et al., 2023; Mustopa & Ridwan, 2024). However, these studies have not specifically and systematically analyzed the role of internal social factors within

pesantren—such as support from peers, ustadz, and the broader *pesantren* community—in shaping the religious moderation identity of *santri*.

Despite the relevance of the *pesantren* social environment in shaping *santri's* identity, quantitative studies structurally measuring the relationship between this environment and the formation of religious moderation identity are still scarce. Moreover, few existing studies explicitly position social support as a primary predictor variable and connect it to established theoretical frameworks such as Social Identity Theory, which elucidates how individuals develop identity through social group affiliation and influence (Hackel, Zaki, & Van Bavel, 2017; Whitaker, 2020). Consequently, this research endeavors to address this gap by quantitatively exploring how specific facets of social support within the *pesantren* environment—encompassing support from educators (kiai and ustadz/ustadzah), peers, and the prevailing *pesantren* policy and culture—collectively and individually contribute to the formation and strengthening of *santri's* religious moderation identity. Ultimately, this study aims to enhance both the theoretical and empirical understanding of the identity formation process among *santri*, providing a more measurable insight into the social mechanisms that foster the internalization of moderation values within *pesantren*.

This research offers novelty through its specific quantitative approach in measuring multi-dimensional social support within *pesantren* as a factor in forming religious moderation identity, along with the direct application of Social Identity Theory as an analytical framework. Based on this theory, *santri's* religious moderation identity is assumed to form when *santri* internalize moderation values from their reference group (the *pesantren* community) and feel a strong affiliation with it. This study provides measurable empirical evidence of how *pesantren*, as unique social environments, can effectively become agents for forming religious moderation identity. The results of this research will not only enrich the body of knowledge in Islamic education and social psychology but also provide practical recommendations for *pesantren* managers and policymakers to further optimize the role of social support in efforts to shape moderate character and identity among the younger generation.

Based on the study of theory and the development of hypotheses, the research model is structured as Figure 1.

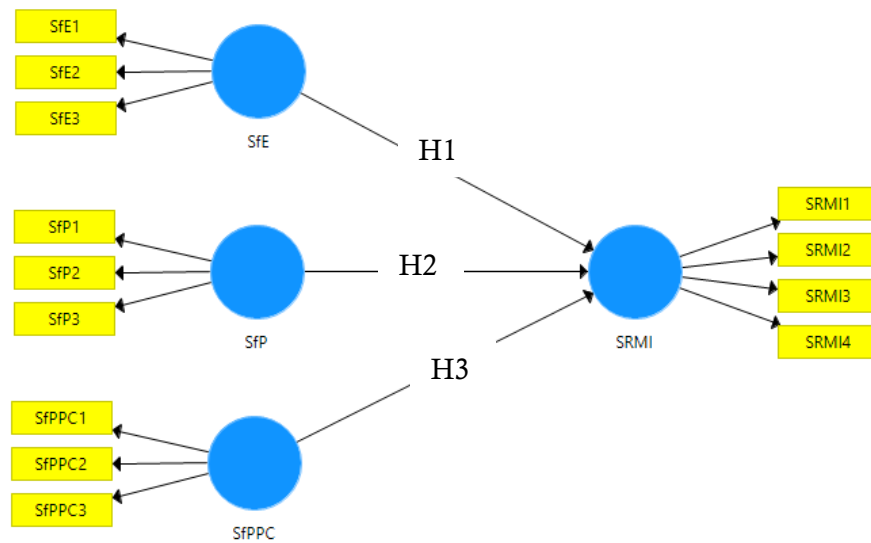


Figure 1. Research model

Note: *SfE* (Support from Educators), *SfP* (Support from Peers), *SfPPC* (Support from Pesantren Policy and Culture), *SRMI* (Santri's Religious Moderation Identity)

- H1: Support from Educators (*SfE*) has a significant positive influence on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity (*SRMI*).
- H2: Support from Peers (*SfP*) has a significant positive influence on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity (*SRMI*).
- H3: Support from *Pesantren* Policy and Culture (*SfPPC*) has a significant positive influence on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity (*SRMI*).

METHOD

This research employs a quantitative approach with a correlational design to examine the relationship between *pesantren* social support and *santri's* religious moderation identity. A quantitative approach was chosen to statistically and measurably assess the extent to which various dimensions of social support within *pesantren* contribute to the formation of *santri's* religious moderation identity. The population for this study comprises all active *santri* who have resided in *pesantren* located in the Karesidenan Kedu region of Central Java for at least one year. This region specifically includes Magelang City, Magelang Regency, Temanggung Regency, Kebumen Regency, Purworejo Regency, and Wonosobo Regency. This location was selected based on its rich *pesantren* traditions and its prevalent moderate religious characteristics, thus ensuring a representative overview. From this population, a

sample of 385 *santri* was selected for the study, representing *pesantren* across these aforementioned districts and regency or city. The sample size for this study was determined using Kothari's (2004):

$$N = \frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$$

den with $Z=1.96$ (at a 5% significance level), $p=0.5$, $q=1-p=0.5$, and $e=0.05$. Based on this calculation, a minimum sample size of 384 respondents was obtained. This number of respondents is considered sufficient to statistically represent the population. To ensure a robust sample size and accommodate potential non-responses or incomplete data, the actual sample for this study was rounded up to 385 *santri*, selected using a simple random sampling technique. The use of random sampling ensures that every *santri* in the population has an equal chance of being selected, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the research findings.

Primary data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire distributed directly to the *santri*. This questionnaire was designed to measure *santri's* perceptions of the social support they receive from three main dimensions: educators (*kiai* and *ustadz/ustadzah*), peers, and *pesantren* policy and culture. Additionally, the questionnaire included items to measure *santri's* religious moderation identity, encompassing aspects of self-recognition as moderate, openness to diverse religious views, and rejection of extremism. The indicators for the research variables can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Variable and Indicators

| Variable | Indicators |
|--|---|
| Support from Educators (SfE) | Spiritual and Intellectual Guidance |
| | Emotional Support |
| | Modeling Moderation |
| Support from Peers (SfP) | Positive Interaction and Collaboration |
| | Informational Support |
| Support from <i>Pesantren</i> Policy and Culture (SfPPC) | Social Acceptance and Inclusion |
| | Pro-Moderation Policies |
| | Inclusive Atmosphere |
| <i>Santri's</i> Religious Moderation Identity (SRMI) | Religious Traditions and Rituals |
| | Self-Recognition as a Moderate Individual |
| | Openness to Diverse Religious Views |
| | Rejection of Extremism/Radicalism |
| | Alignment with <i>Pesantren's</i> Moderate Values |

All items in the questionnaire utilized a Likert scale to capture the *santri's* level of agreement or perception. The validity and reliability of the instruments were tested through a pilot study on a small group of respondents before being distributed to the main sample.

Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach with the Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) method. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its capability to analyze complex research models with multidimensional latent variables, as well as its ability to process data that may not meet strict multivariate normality assumptions (Sarstedt, Ringle, & Hair, 2017). With a sample size of 385, PLS-SEM is also highly suitable for models aiming to test predictive and causal relationships. The data analysis process began with the evaluation of the measurement model (Outer Model) to ensure convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability of each construct (Hair et al., 2021). Subsequently, the structural model (Inner Model) was evaluated to test the research hypotheses regarding the influence of *pesantren* social support on *santri's* religious moderation identity, including examining path coefficients, R-square values, and statistical significance (p-values) (Avkiran & Ringle, 2018). The entire analysis process was facilitated by the statistical software SmartPLS 3.0.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Outer model evaluation

The measurement model, or outer model, with reflective indicators is evaluated based on the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability of the indicator blocks. An individual reflective measure is considered to have a high contribution if its correlation value with the measured construct is greater than 0.70 (Siswanto et al., 2024). Nevertheless, for research in the early stages of measurement scale development, loading values between 0.50 and 0.60 are still acceptable (Jordan & Spiess, 2019). Based on the model measurement results displayed in Figure 2, all indicators of the research variables have loading factor values above 0.50. This indicates that all indicators have met the requirements for convergent validity.

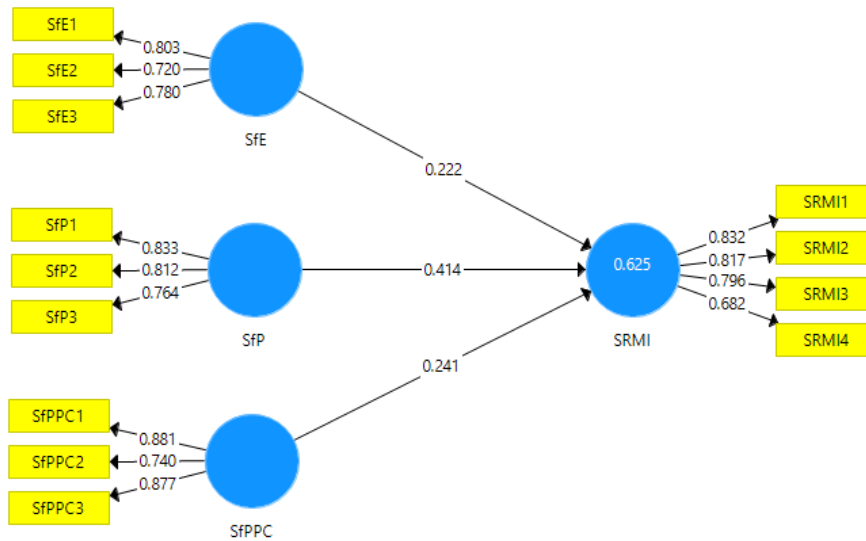


Figure 2. Convergent validity

Source: Smart PLS3 Output (2025)

Note: SFE (Support from Educators), SFP (Support from Peers), SfPPC (Support from Pesantren Policy and Culture), SRMI (Santri's Religious Moderation Identity)

Average variance extracted and latent correlation

One method for assessing discriminant validity involves comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlation values between that construct and all other constructs in the model (Dash & Paul, 2021). If the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs, then discriminant validity is considered good. The AVE test results are presented in Table 2. Based on the AVE values in Table 2, all variables in this study have an AVE value above 0.50. This indicates that each indicator is capable of validly representing the construct it measures. Thus, the measurement model in this study is declared to meet the requirements for both convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Table 2. Average variance extracted

| Variable | AVE |
|--|-------|
| Support from Educators | 0.591 |
| Support from Peers | 0.646 |
| Support from <i>Pesantren</i> Policy and Culture | 0.698 |
| <i>Santri's</i> Religious Moderation Identity | 0.615 |

Source: Smart PLS3 Output (2025)

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability

Further examination of convergent validity was conducted through testing construct reliability by examining the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values, as shown in Table 3. A construct is considered reliable if both its composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values exceed 0.70. This reliability test was performed to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and precision of the instrument in measuring the intended constructs. In the PLS-SEM method using SmartPLS 3.0 software, the reliability of reflective indicator constructs can be measured in two ways: through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2020). The test results in Table 3 indicate that all constructs in this study have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above 0.70. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement model in this study has met the reliability criteria and is suitable for further analysis at the inner model evaluation stage.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha dan composite reliability

| Variable | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| Support from Educators | 0.709 | 0.812 |
| Support from Peers | 0.727 | 0.845 |
| Support from <i>Pesantren</i> Policy and Culture | 0.779 | 0.873 |
| <i>Santri's</i> Religious Moderation Identity | 0.789 | 0.864 |

Source: Smart PLS3 Output (2025)

Inner model of evaluation

The inner model test evaluates the latent constructs hypothesized in this study. In testing the structural model, a bootstrapping statistical procedure is performed, which is a resampling technique. Resampling means that respondents are randomly drawn with replacement from the original sample, and this process is repeated until the desired number of observations is obtained, as shown in Figure 3.

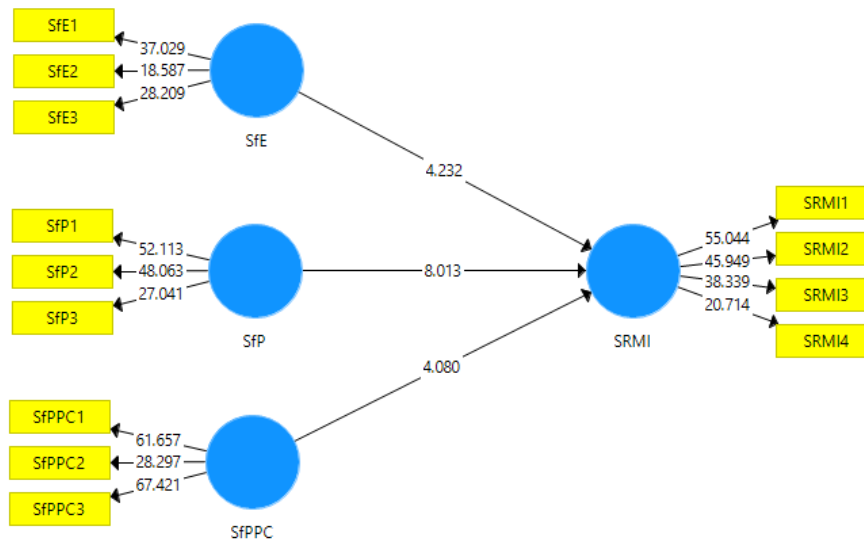


Figure 3. Inner model

Source: Smart PLS3 Output (2025)

Note: SfE (Support from Educators), SfP (Support from Peers), SfPPC (Support from Pesantren Policy and Culture), SRMI (Santri's Religious Moderation Identity)

Based on the test results, it's evident that all path relationships between constructs met the significance level at a 95% confidence interval ($CI > 1.96$). This is a crucial requirement in evaluation with loading factors, which is performed to assess the significance of the relationship between latent constructs and their indicators. Further testing of the structural model was conducted by examining the R-square value, which represents the goodness of fit of the model. The change in R-square value is used to explain whether the exogenous latent variables have a substantial influence on the endogenous latent variable. R-square values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 respectively indicate that the model has strong, moderate, and weak explanatory power (Khan & Srivastava, 2020).

Next, to determine the strength of the endogenous and exogenous variables in this model, we can observe the R-square value for each endogenous variable in Table 4. Table 4 explains the contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable. The R-square value for the *Santri's Religious Moderation Identity* variable is 0.625 or 62.5%. This means that the variables Support from Educators, Support from Peers, and Support from *Pesantren* Policy and Culture collectively contribute 62.5% to the *Santri's Religious Moderation Identity* variable.

Table 4. R Square

| Dependent Variable | R Square |
|---|----------|
| <i>Santri's Religious Moderation Identity</i> | 0.625 |

Source: Smart PLS3 Output (2025)

The Results of Hypothesis Test

The test results show a normed fit index (NFI) value of 0.919 and a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value of 0.072. A model is declared to meet the Goodness of Fit criteria if the NFI reaches 0.90 or more and the SRMR is 0.086 or less (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). Therefore, the model developed in this study not only meets but precisely aligns with the Goodness of Fit criteria. The results indicate that hypotheses H1-H3 are accepted because their p-values are less than 0.05. The detailed hypothesis test results can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Uji Hipotesis

| Hypothesis | Beta | T Statistics | P Values | Dicission |
|------------------|-------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| H1 SfE -> SRMI | 0.222 | 4.232 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H2 SfP -> SRMI | 0.414 | 8.013 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H3 SfPPC -> SRMI | 0.241 | 4.080 | 0.000 | Accepted |

Source: Smart PLS3 Output (2025)

Note: SfE (Support from Educators), SfP (Support from Peers), SfPPC (Support from Pesantren Policy and Culture), SRMI (Santri's Religious Moderation Identity)

The Influence of Support from Educators (SfE) on Santri's Religious Moderation Identity (SRMI)

The finding that Support from Educators (*kiai* and *ustadz/ustadzah*) has a significant positive influence on *Santri's Religious Moderation Identity* (SRMI) underscores the crucial role of religious authority figures within the *pesantren* environment (Beta = 0.222, p=0.000). A more granular analysis reveals that among the indicators of Support from Educators, SFE1 (Spiritual and Intellectual Guidance) exhibited the strongest factor loading (0.803). This suggests that the spiritual and intellectual guidance provided by educators is the most salient dimension through which their support fosters *santri's* religious moderation identity. While all indicators of Support from Educators contributed significantly, the prominence of SFE1 highlights the

nuanced ways in which direct guidance and intellectual discourse from educators are key in shaping the internalization of moderation values among *santri*.

The finding that Support from Educators (*kiai* and *ustadz/ustadzah*) has a significant positive influence on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity provides crucial insight into the central role of religious authority figures within the *pesantren* environment. This result strongly supports Social Identity Theory, which posits that individuals internalize norms, values, and behaviors from the reference groups they identify with (Hogg & Rinella, 2018; Sassenberg et al., 2011). In the *pesantren* context, *kiai* and *ustadz/ustadzah* function as strong ingroups and primary social models (Kawakip & Sulanam, 2023; Umar et al., 2024). When educators consistently display moderate attitudes, provide balanced spiritual and intellectual guidance, and demonstrate emotional support, *santri* tend to identify with this group identity, which in turn shapes their religious moderation identity. The direct guidance and exemplary behavior provided by educators not only form a cognitive understanding of moderation but also influence the affective and behavioral aspects of *santri*, encouraging them to adopt and maintain inclusive and tolerant religious views.

This significant positive influence of educator support is also consistent with various previous studies that highlight the strategic role of leaders and educators in shaping students' character and religious perspectives. Studies by Longobardi et al. (2021; Nejati & Shafaei, 2018), for instance, found that the exemplary transformational leadership of a teacher positively correlated with students' prosocial behavior. In the *pesantren* context, *kiai* and *ustadz/ustadzah* are not merely sources of information but also inspiring role models who deeply influence *santri*. *Kiai* and *ustadz/ustadzah* have the capacity to shape *santri's* religious understanding through *halaqah*, personal advice, and daily interactions, all of which contribute to creating an environment that validates and reinforces moderation values. This finding underscores that the effectiveness of *pesantren* in promoting moderation heavily relies on the quality and consistency of the support provided by their educators.

The research findings are highly relevant for optimizing the role of *pesantren* in fostering religious moderation identity, particularly in *pesantren* within Karesidenan Kedu, Central Java. These findings affirm that development and training programs for *pesantren* educators should focus on enhancing their capacity to

provide moderate spiritual and intellectual guidance, as well as skills in offering emotional support and serving as exemplary tolerant figures. Investment in developing educator capacity will directly improve the quality of social support received by *santri*, which will ultimately strengthen the formation of *santri's* religious moderation identity (Thoyib et al., 2024; Mu'ti, 2023). Thus, *pesantren* are not merely institutions for transmitting religious knowledge but are also living communities where the role of educators is key in shaping *santri* who possess a moderate and tolerant understanding of Islam, aligning with Indonesia's vision of religious diversity.

The Influence of Support from Peers (SfP) on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity (SRMI)

The finding that Support from Peers (SfP) has a significant positive influence on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity (SRMI) (Beta = 0.414, p=0.000) re-emphasizes the crucial role of the informal social environment in shaping religious identity within *pesantren*. Notably, SfP1 (Positive Interaction and Collaboration) exhibited the highest factor loading (0.833) among peer support indicators. This strongly suggests that positive interactions and collaborative activities among peers are the most impactful dimensions through which peer influence contributes to the formation of *santri's* religious moderation identity. The substantial influence of SfP, particularly through its emphasis on constructive engagement, highlights how daily social dynamics among *santri* are pivotal in fostering an environment conducive to the internalization of moderate religious values.

The finding that Support from Peers has a significant positive influence on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity re-emphasizes the crucial role of the informal social environment in shaping religious identity within *pesantren*. This consistently supports Social Identity Theory, which stresses that an individual's identity is heavily influenced by their identification with social groups and the norms prevailing within them (Jans et al., 2011). In the *pesantren* context, peers form a highly influential ingroup where daily interactions, discussions, and collective activities become the primary medium for mutually validating and strengthening an understanding of religious moderation (Shen et al., 2023). When *santri* are in a peer environment that

supports open discussion, demonstrates tolerance, and rejects extremism, they tend to easily internalize these values as part of their religious identity. Informational support and social acceptance from peers reinforce a sense of belonging and adherence to moderate group norms.

This research finding also resonates with various previous studies that highlight the impact of peer group socialization on attitude and behavior formation, especially in boarding school environments. For example, research by Benish-Weisman. (2022) and Yu et al. (2024) indicates that the quality of peer interaction and support significantly correlates with students' social adaptation and moral values. In a *pesantren* setting, where *santri* live and study together for years, peer influence can be as strong, if not stronger, than educator influence in certain aspects, particularly in shaping daily practices and attitudes (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021; Patacchini et al., 2017). A positive and supportive peer environment creates a "safe space" for *santri* to explore and articulate their moderate understandings without fear of judgment, while also serving as a filter against the influence of deviant ideologies.

The findings underscore the importance of facilitating and managing peer group dynamics within *pesantren* to be conducive to the development of religious moderation identity. Programs that encourage positive interaction, collaboration in religious and social activities, and constructive dialogue among *santri* need to be enhanced. For instance, forming moderation-based study groups, holding regular discussions on tolerance issues among *santri*, or implementing social projects that involve diversity can be effective initiatives. Thus, *pesantren* do not solely rely on the role of educators but also empower *santri* as agents of moderation within the *pesantren* environment. Strengthening peer support networks will create a more comprehensive and resilient ecosystem in forming *santri's* religious moderation identity, ensuring the organic sustainability of moderate values among the younger generation of *pesantren*.

The Influence of Support from *Pesantren* Policy and Culture (SfPPC) on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity (SRMI)

The research finding that Support from *Pesantren* Policy and Culture (SfPPC) has a significant positive influence on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity (SRMI) (Beta = 0.241, p=0.000) highlights the critical role of the institutional framework and

collective environment in shaping religious views. A closer look at its indicators reveals that both SfPPC1 (Pro-Moderation Policies) with a loading of 0.881 and SfPPC3 (Religious Traditions and Rituals) with a loading of 0.877 demonstrated exceptionally high and comparable contributions. This indicates that explicit policies supporting moderation and the consistent practice of moderate religious traditions and rituals within the *pesantren* are the most powerful aspects through which the institutional and cultural environment shapes *santri's* religious moderation identity. The strong influence of these two indicators underscores how a well-structured and culturally reinforced environment within *pesantren* effectively fosters the internalization of balanced and tolerant religious values.

The research finding that Support from *Pesantren* Policy and Culture has a significant positive influence on *Santri's* Religious Moderation Identity highlights the critical role of the institutional framework and collective environment in shaping religious views. This result aligns with Social Identity Theory, which underscores how norms, values, and rules prevailing within a group (in this case, *pesantren* as a social entity) shape the identity of its members (Hogg & Rinella, 2018; Verkuyten, 2021). Clear pro-moderation policies, an inclusive atmosphere, and religious traditions that prioritize values of tolerance collectively send a strong message to *santri* about the expected ingroup identity (Qoumas et al., 2024; Thoyib et al., 2024). When *santri* are consistently exposed to a moderate *pesantren* culture, they tend to internalize these values as part of their self-identity, strengthening their self-recognition as moderate individuals open to differences.

This support from *pesantren* policy and culture also aligns with various literature on institutional socialization and group norm formation. Studies by Jančius et al. (2021) and Negm, (2024), for instance, indicate that a learning environment explicitly promoting certain values will significantly influence students' attitudes and behaviors. In the *pesantren* context, policies prohibiting extremism, programs mandating interfaith dialogue, or religious rituals emphasizing unity are not merely rules but also cultural manifestations that solidify a moderation identity (Ebrahimi et al., 2021; Khotimah & Sukron, 2023). An inclusive atmosphere that allows *santri* from diverse backgrounds to interact and engage in healthy discussions is also crucial.

This creates a space where moderate understandings are collectively reinforced, and every individual feels secure in expressing a balanced religious identity.

These findings provide crucial information for *pesantren* managers in formulating strategies for strengthening religious moderation. *Pesantren* leadership needs to actively and continuously review and reinforce internal policies that explicitly support moderation, ensuring these rules are well-implemented and establishing mechanisms to address biases or disagreements (Honingh, Ruiters, & Thiel, 2020; Levatino et al., 2024). Furthermore, efforts to cultivate an inclusive, open, and diversity-appreciating *pesantren* culture should be consistently promoted through various extracurricular activities, discussions, or open forums. By making moderation an integral part of *pesantren* culture and policy, these institutions can effectively and systemically shape *santri's* religious moderation identity, producing graduates who are not only religiously knowledgeable but also agents of peace and tolerance in society.

CONCLUSION

This research quantitatively affirms that social support within *pesantren*—encompassing support from educators, peers, and *pesantren* policy and culture—significantly and positively shapes *santri's* religious moderation identity. This finding strengthens Social Identity Theory by demonstrating how *santri's* identification with supportive reference groups within the *pesantren* environment leads to the internalization of moderation values. *Kiai* and *ustadz/ustadzah* serve as models and guides, peers provide social validation and collaboration, while *pesantren* policy and culture create an institutional framework that promotes tolerance and inclusivity. All these elements synergistically form a balanced and adaptable religious identity for *santri*.

The crucial implication of this study is the urgent call for *pesantren* administrators to proactively optimize these three dimensions of social support to strengthen *santri's* religious moderation identity. Investing in educator capacity building, facilitating positive interactions among *santri*, and reviewing and reinforcing pro-moderation policies will have a significant impact. This research also paves the way for longitudinal studies to understand the dynamics of religious

moderation identity over time, as well as the exploration of other factors that may mediate or moderate this relationship, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of *pesantren's* role in maintaining religious harmony in Indonesia.

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