Integrating Islamic Values and Indonesian National Identity:

Saifuddin Zuhri's Framework for Religious Moderation Education

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ABSTRACT :

The rise of religious intolerance and ideological polarization in Indonesia has generated an urgent need for a robust conceptual foundation for religious moderation education. Existing approaches often face public misperceptions, including accusations of secularization or depoliticization of Islamic identity. This study addresses this epistemic challenge by reconstructing the nationalist-religious paradigm of KH. Saifuddin Zuhri whose thought integrates Islamic ethics, Indonesian identity, and national commitment. Using a qualitative historical-philosophical method, this research analyzes primary sources such as *Berangkat dari Pesantren*, political documents, and ministry archives, complemented by secondary literature on religious moderation and Islamic education. Value hermeneutics, discourse analysis, and constructive model building were employed to synthesize Zuhri's ideas into the MoNaREF (Moderation-Based National-Religious Educational Framework). The findings show that Zuhri's intellectual construction rests on three pillars, religion as public ethics, religious nationalism, and the integration of religion and the state, which together form a coherent basis for religious moderation. The MoNaREF model operationalizes these pillars into value, pedagogical, and social dimensions, offering a contextually grounded yet globally relevant framework for strengthening religious moderation in contemporary Indonesian Islamic education.

Keywords: *religious moderation, KH Saifuddin Zuhri, nationalism, islamic education.*

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of rising religious extremism in Indonesia over the past two decades has raised concerns about the fragility of social harmony, which has long been a distinctive characteristic of the Indonesian nation. Tensions between religious groups and the state have become evident in various public discourses, especially through religious sermons whose dissemination has been accelerated by social media (Ali, 2005). The root of this extremism lies in the emergence of religious ideologies that condemn democracy, nationalism, and the nation-state, considering them incompatible with Islamic principles.

In this context, the discourse on religious moderation becomes essential as an effort to establish balance between religious commitment and national identity. Religious moderation has been mainstreamed as a national agenda through various policies of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, its implementation has often led to misunderstandings, as if religious moderation aims to suppress religious expression or represents a form of state secularization. Such perceptions instead widen the gap between the concept of moderation and the public (Faridah & Hakim, 2020).

Therefore, a strong epistemological foundation is required so that religious moderation can be positioned appropriately and accepted widely by society. This foundation must not only be theoretical but also rooted in historical figures who, throughout their lives, were able to harmoniously integrate Islamic values with national principles. Such figures can serve as strategic references for grounding religious moderation within the Indonesian context (Faridah & Hakim, 2020).

One prominent figure who embodied a strong national-religious intellectual framework is KH. Saifuddin Zuhri. As Minister of Religious Affairs (1962‑1967), an Islamic scholar, and a nationalist who was deeply involved in the political dynamics of early independence, Zuhri developed unique perspectives on the relationship between Islam and the state. His experiences in the pesantren environment also shaped a comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptive religious vision responsive to the challenges of the time (Faridah & Hakim, 2020).

Saifuddin Zuhri's concept of religious nationalism is reflected in his efforts to integrate Islamic values with Indonesian identity and nationhood. For him, commitment to Islam and love for the homeland are not two opposing poles, but mutually reinforcing elements that shape responsible citizens. His perspective demonstrates how Islam can function as an ethical force in national development.

In his writings, particularly Berangkat dari Pesantren, Zuhri emphasizes that Islam contains a vision of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* that is not only spiritual but also socio-national. This vision illustrates how Islamic values can be manifested in the public sphere without losing their authenticity. His thoughts demonstrate that national commitment can coexist harmoniously with religious devotion.

Aside from his written works, governmental archives from his tenure as Minister of Religious Affairs show how Zuhri formulated an integrative view of religion and the state. These primary sources provide crucial data for exploring intellectual constructs relevant to the development of religious moderation education in contemporary contexts.

Although numerous studies have examined Saifuddin Zuhri, most remain at the descriptive level. Previous research has focused on his political history, his contributions to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and his role in developing pesantren institutions. While these aspects are significant, they have not yet explored the deeper epistemological dimension of his contribution to religious moderation (Whidia et al., 2024).

No study has explicitly and systematically constructed an educational model of religious moderation based on Saifuddin Zuhri's national-religious thought. In fact, such a conceptual framework could serve as a crucial foundation for developing a pedagogical approach rooted in local traditions yet compatible with global demands. This gap forms the basis of the present research.

Based on this background, this study employs an integrative approach that combines intellectual history, value analysis, and pedagogical construction. This approach ensures that the resulting model of religious moderation education is not only historically valid but also pedagogically relevant. Finally, this research produces the MoNaREF (Moderation-Based National-Religious Educational Framework), a framework designed as a locally grounded yet globally applicable model for religious moderation education. This framework strengthens Zuhri's position as an important reference in the development of contemporary Indonesian Islamic education.

Methods

This study applies a qualitative approach with a historical-philosophical and constructive design. The historical approach is used to trace the thought of KH. Saifuddin Zuhri through his writings, speeches, ministry archives, and policy documents from his period of service. Meanwhile, the philosophical approach is applied to interpret the values, principles, and

theoretical foundations of his ideas within the context of Islam and nationhood (Malahati et al., 2023).

Data were collected using three main techniques. First, document analysis of primary works such as Berangkat dari Pesantren and written archives. Second, literature review of recent studies on religious moderation, Islamic nationalism, and Islamic education in Indonesia. Third, historical interpretation to understand the socio-political context that shaped Zuhri's thought (Wijaya, 2019).

Data analysis was conducted in three stages. First, value hermeneutics, which interprets Zuhri's fundamental ideas by considering their historical context and moral objectives. Second, discourse analysis to examine the relationships between Islam, the state, and society in his thought. Third, model construction, which formulates the conceptual framework of MoNaREF (Moderation-Based National-Religious Education Framework) based on the synthesis of research findings.

Result
Zuhri's Perspective on Nationalist-Religious

The thought of Saifuddin Zuhri regarding the relationship between Islam and the nation rests on three interrelated pillars that form a solid national-religious construction. These pillars are religion as public ethics, religious nationalism, and the integration of religion and the state (F. Hidayat & Febriana, 2025). For Zuhri, these pillars do not stand independently but constitute a unified framework that affirms the role of Islam in shaping the character of the Indonesian nation (Nashir et al., 2019).

The first pillar, religion as public ethics, positions Islam not merely as a spiritual and ritual system but as a source of moral values for public life. Zuhri viewed Islamic teachings as encompassing universal principles such as justice, honesty, trustworthiness, and social responsibility, which could serve as ethical foundations for society. These ethical values are not intended to dominate the state formally but to strengthen the moral character of citizens (F. Hidayat & Febriana, 2025).

In his view, a society that upholds religious values as its moral compass would be capable of creating a harmonious social life. Zuhri believed that public ethics grounded in religion would prevent destructive practices such as corruption, violence, intolerance, and abuse of power. Thus, religion is more than a personal matter; it is also a contribution to the common good (Daulad et al., n.d.). This concept of public ethics also acts as a gentle critique of groups that interpret Islam solely in legalistic terms. Zuhri emphasized that the essence of religion is not limited to jurisprudential rules but lies in noble values that must be reflected in social, political, and national behavior. Therefore, Muslims must serve as moral exemplars in the public sphere.

Saifuddin Zuhri further believed that religion as public ethics can reinforce democracy. According to him, democracy requires communities committed to ethics and responsibility, and Islamic values provide the moral foundation needed for social control, justice, and civilized political participation. In this perspective, Islam is not a threat to democracy but its ethical strength. The second pillar in Zuhri's thought is religious nationalism. He asserted that love for the homeland is an integral part of faith. The principle *hubbul wathan minal* iman is not merely a slogan but a theological conviction rooted in the Muslim duty to safeguard the public good. According to him, nationalism grows out of Islamic teachings that uphold humanity and justice.

Saifuddin Zuhri understood nationalism not as a secular Western concept but as an expression of faith within the Indonesian context. He saw how ulama, santri, and Muslims actively participated in defending independence, showing that Islamic nationalism emerged from historical experience rather than theoretical construction. Therefore, nationalism for Zuhri is inseparable from spirituality.

His model of religious nationalism emphasizes that love for the homeland is a moral responsibility. Muslims, he argued, must not view the nation as an opponent but as a shared home. They should be at the forefront in preserving national integrity. This view serves as a counterbalance to extremist movements that attempt to separate Islamic identity from national identity (Daulad et al., n.d.). In his writings, Zuhri consistently stated that deeper understanding of Islam leads to stronger love for the nation. This conviction makes moderation an inherent aspect of religious nationalism, as love of the homeland cannot be built upon hatred, intolerance, or violence. Nationalism must be inclusive, reflecting Islamic ethics that respect diversity.

The third pillar in Zuhri's intellectual construction is the integration of religion and the state. This integration does not imply the establishment of a religious state, but rather a reciprocal relationship in which religious values support the functioning of the state and the state safeguards religious practice. For Zuhri, Indonesia is a legitimate platform for the dignified expression of Islamic values (Burhani, 2017).

He understood Pancasila as a meeting point of various groups, including Muslims, so there is no need to place it in opposition to Islam. According to him, the principles of Pancasila align with Islamic teachings, such as belief in God, humanity, unity, deliberation, and social justice (Nashir et al., 2019). Thus, Muslims can participate actively in the state without relinquishing their religious identity. The integration of religion and the state also appears in his views on the role of religious bureaucracy. As Minister of Religious Affairs, Zuhri saw the ministry as an instrument for ensuring that Islamic moral values and education contribute positively to national development. The state does not interfere with matters of belief but supports the moral empowerment of society (Faridah & Hakim, 2020).

This perspective creates a symbiotic relationship between religion and the state. The state protects religious freedom, while religion provides moral guidance for state governance. Such integration rejects two extremes: secular states that marginalize religion and theocratic states that govern citizens in the name of religion. Zuhri proposed a moderate, contextual middle path. This integrative idea also involves a reinterpretation of Islamic law. Zuhri argued that the objective of sharia (*maqashid al-syariah*) is to preserve public welfare. In modern Indonesia, such welfare can be achieved within the *Pancasila* state system. Therefore, implementing Islamic values does not require altering the form of the state but strengthening the moral character of its citizens (Anam et al., 2021).

This integration is reinforced by his emphasis on national unity. Zuhri believed that Indonesia's diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and religions requires a shared commitment beyond group interests. Islam, he stated, teaches universal brotherhood, making it highly compatible with efforts to maintain national cohesion. These three pillars work synergistically in Zuhri's thought. Religion as public ethics provides the moral foundation, such as religious nationalism builds psychological and emotional commitment, and the integration of religion and the state offers a structural framework for realizing these values in national life. This synergy makes his ideas profoundly relevant today.

Zuhri's national-religious construction has become an important reference for promoting religious moderation in Indonesia. His framework demonstrates that strong Islamic identity can coexist harmoniously with national commitment. In an era of rising extremism, his thought offers an ethical and historical foundation for strengthening Islam as a unifying force. Furthermore, his perspective challenges narratives that condemn the nation-state and democracy. By affirming the compatibility of Islamic values with Indonesia's political system, Zuhri showed that extremism originates not from Islamic teachings but from misinterpretation of religion (Hefner, 2020). This argument remains crucial in contemporary Islamic discourse.

His ideas also offer significant guidance for Islamic education. Zuhri consistently emphasized the importance of forming individuals who are ethical, knowledgeable, and patriotic. Pesantren and madrasah, in his view, are strategic institutions for nurturing moderate religious nationalism. Through education, these three pillars can be transmitted across generations. In the

context of globalization, where religious and national identities face rapid transformation, Zuhri's national-religious pillars provide a stable framework for understanding the relationship between religion and the state without falling into polarization. This is what makes his thought continuously relevant.

Overall, the national-religious construction of KH. Saifuddin Zuhri represents a major contribution to Indonesian Islamic thought (Hefner, 2020). He successfully bridged Islamic teachings with national aspirations through an ethical, spiritual, and historical approach. His ideas serve not only as an intellectual legacy but also as a practical foundation for building a peaceful and dignified national life.

Zuhri's Perspective on Religious Moderation

KH. Saifuddin Zuhri regarded openness to differences as an essential foundation in religious and national life. For him, diversity is a historical reality of Indonesia that cannot be erased but must be nurtured as a divine blessing. He believed that religion, especially Islam, teaches respect for social, cultural, and intellectual plurality. In Zuhri's view, diversity must never become a source of hostility or division. Instead, plurality serves as a means to broaden insights and to test the moral maturity of society. He often emphasized that one cannot be a good Muslim if one fails to respect fellow human beings, including those with different beliefs (F. Hidayat & Febriana, 2025).

Openness to differences, according to Zuhri, is a spiritual attitude rooted in Islamic teachings of *tasamuh* (tolerance) and *ta'aruf* (mutual understanding). He believed that exclusive attitudes only close the door to peace and hinder harmonious relations among citizens. For this reason, Zuhri rejected any doctrine that promotes automatic rejection of others. Furthermore, Zuhri believed that openness must be taught through education and social habituation. Pesantren and madrasah, in his perspective, should serve as spaces for cultivating characters that appreciate diversity. He was convinced that Islamic educational institutions could produce generations who are courageous in dialogue, not generations who are resistant to differences. A dialogical attitude is another key element emphasized by Zuhri. He saw dialogue as the primary path to resolving conflict, maintaining unity, and building mutual understanding. Dialogue, in his perspective, is not merely the exchange of opinions but a process of listening sincerely to one another (Faridah & Hakim, 2020).

Zuhri argued that dialogue must be grounded in ethics, mutual respect, and the avoidance of coercion. According to him, religious truth does not need to be defended through violence but through clear reasoning and virtuous conduct. He often cited examples of classical scholars who engaged in robust dialogue without compromising their religious identity. In a diverse nation, a dialogical attitude is a pressing necessity. Zuhri believed that Indonesia can only maintain its integrity if its people willingly engage in conversations across religious and social boundaries. Dialogue functions as a tool to dispel prejudice and foster cooperation.

A dialogical attitude also serves as an effective means of countering radical ideologies. According to Zuhri, extremism grows from closed-mindedness, from the refusal to listen, and from fear of differing viewpoints. Thus, he called on Muslims to create spaces of dialogue as a form of strengthening their faith, not as a sign of weakness. The rejection of extremism is a major pillar of Zuhri's thought. He rejected all forms of teachings that justify violence or declare fellow Muslims deviant merely because of differing interpretations. For him, Islam is a religion of peace that condemns actions that destroy life and divide the community (F. Hidayat & Febriana, 2025).

Zuhri believed that extremism stems from the inability to understand religion comprehensively. A religion understood only in symbolic or legalistic terms tends to produce rigid, black-and-white thinking. Zuhri stressed the importance of reading Islamic teachings holistically, including their moral and humanistic dimensions. Throughout his public life, Zuhri consistently voiced that extremism contradicts the essence of Islam. He rejected ideas that

delegitimize the state, that demand rigid implementation of syariah, and that ignore social context. For Zuhri, the true Islam is the Islam that brings peace and public benefit.

His rejection of extremism does not imply diminishing Islamic identity. In fact, Zuhri sought to return Islam to its authentic nature as a mercy for all humanity. Extremism, in his view, is a deviation from the noble values of religion. Therefore, he urged Muslims to embrace a balanced and moderate understanding (Haeba et al., 2024). The fourth principle in Zuhri's thought is the balance between syariah and humanity. He asserted that syariah should not be understood rigidly without considering public welfare. Syariah, for Zuhri, is designed to protect human dignity, not to oppress or instill fear.

Zuhri believed that syariah must be interpreted through the framework of *maqashid al syariah*, the higher objectives of Islamic law that include the protection of life, intellect, lineage, property, and religious freedom. With this approach, the application of syariah is not limited to legal formalism but to interpreting moral values that support human well-being. He rejected views that use syariah as a political tool or justify violence. Zuhri emphasized that syariah cannot stand without justice and compassion. Without these two elements, syariah loses its essence as a guide for ethical living.

For Zuhri, humanity is the core of Islamic teaching. Every action, rule, or religious decision must consider its impact on human beings. Therefore, he encouraged Muslims to understand syariah with wisdom and in ways that remain relevant to Indonesia's social context. The balance between syariah and humanity provides a way for Islam to contribute constructively to nation-building. Zuhri wanted Muslims to participate in political and social life not through claims of absolute truth but through actions that bring benefit. This is the substantive Islam he advocated (F. H. Hidayat, 2025).

Ultimately, these four principles, openness to differences, a dialogical attitude, rejection of extremism, and balance between syariah and humanity, define the distinctive character of Zuhri's national-religious thought. He offered an Islam that is welcoming, constructive, and relevant to Indonesia's pluralistic reality. His ideas remain an important legacy for nurturing religious moderation in the contemporary era.

The MoNaREF Model

The MoNaREF (Moderation-Based National-Religious Educational Framework) model is built upon a foundation of values rooted in the tradition of moderate Islam and the historical experience of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago. These values are not merely normative concepts but guiding principles that have proven effective in shaping the character of Indonesian Muslim society. This value foundation serves as the starting point for forming a balanced religious and national identity (Zulfadli et al., 2024).

One of the core values in MoNaREF is *tawassuth*, the attitude of moderation or taking the middle path in understanding religious teachings. Moderation here does not imply relativism but the ability to avoid extremes. *Tawassuth* teaches learners to refrain from black and white thinking and to understand religion through a rational and spiritual approach. In addition to *tawassuth*, the value of *tasamuh* or tolerance is an integral part of the model. *Tasamuh* emphasizes respect for differences, both within the Islamic community and between Muslims and adherents of other religions. This principle teaches that differences are not threats but part of God's will that must be embraced with sincerity (Hasan, 2014).

The next value is *tawazun*, the capacity to maintain balance across various aspects of life. In the context of moderational education, *tawazun* means harmonizing syariah with social realities, individual rights with public interests, and religious commitments with national duties. This balance prevents the rise of extremist thinking that tends to impose one aspect over others.

The fourth value in the MoNaREF foundation is *hubbul wathan*, love of the homeland. In the perspective of KH. Saifuddin Zuhri, love for one's country is part of faith because it relates directly to the obligation of safeguarding the welfare and security of society. This value integrates

the spiritual dimension with national commitment, enabling learners to grow as Muslims who genuinely love their country. The pedagogical dimension of MoNaREF is designed to ensure that these values do not remain theoretical but are internalized through active and dialogical educational processes. This pedagogical approach emphasizes the development of critical thinking, historical awareness, and learner's reflective abilities.

One important method in this pedagogical dimension is interactive dialogue. In learning activities, teachers and learners engage in open discussions about religious, national, and social issues. Interactive dialogue allows learners to practice listening, considering arguments, and expressing opinions with civility. This dialogical approach also encourages learners to face differences of opinion with maturity. By being accustomed to dialogue, they are less prone to radical narratives that tend to forbid differences. This attitude aligns with the spirit of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* Islam, which is inclusive and filled with empathy.

Another method in the pedagogical dimension is the study of the history of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago. Through this approach, learners become familiar with the Islamic tradition that developed in Indonesia, known for its moderation, openness, and accommodation toward local culture. This history demonstrates that Islam can coexist harmoniously with culture while contributing to national development.

Historical study also provides awareness that moderation is not a new concept but a long-established heritage of the archipelagic ulama. With this understanding, learners can develop pride in their identity and become more confident that moderation is an integral part of local Islamic tradition. Critical reflection constitutes the third component of the pedagogical dimension. Learners are encouraged to analyze contemporary issues such as radicalism, intolerance, and the politicization of religion through the perspective of moderation. Through reflective exercises, they learn to interpret reality deeply and avoid being easily trapped by provocative narratives. The social dimension of MoNaREF brings values and learning processes into real-life contexts. Here, education extends beyond the classroom through learner's active involvement in social activities and interreligious dialogue. Cross-religious networking becomes one of the key strategies.

Through such networks, learners have opportunities to meet, discuss, and collaborate with people from different faiths. These interactions build trust, remove prejudices, and broaden their understanding of diversity. Collaborative activities strengthen the awareness that plurality is a national strength.

Social harmony becomes the overarching goal of social engagement. By learning directly from communities, learners become aware of the importance of maintaining good relations among groups of different religions and cultures. Harmony does not arise automatically, it must be built through positive interactions grounded in mutual respect and willingness to understand others.

The practice of tolerance represents the concrete implementation of moderational values in everyday life. Learners are encouraged to practice tolerance within their families, schools, and communities. Tolerance here is understood not as passive acceptance but as active effort to create safe and peaceful spaces for everyone. The outcome of the MoNaREF model is the emergence of moderate learners who possess moral sensitivity, national commitment, and an inclusive understanding of religion. Such learners can place Islamic values within social contexts wisely and avoid falling into narrow fanaticism.

In addition to moderation, the model aims to cultivate learners who hold a national-religious identity. They do not see religion and nationality as conflicting entities but as mutually reinforcing components. This identity enables them to make constructive contributions to national development. Critical thinking is another essential learning outcome. Learners who think critically can analyze religious and social issues objectively, resist misleading information, and provide solutions to national problems. This capacity also equips them with resilience against the infiltration of extremist ideologies.

The final outcome is resilience against radicalism. Through a strong value foundation, deep pedagogical processes, and direct social experiences, learners develop immunity to radical teachings. They grow into individuals capable of protecting themselves, their families, and their communities from extremist threats. Thus, the MoNaREF model not only builds cognitive knowledge about moderation but also cultivates character and social skills vital for national life. It stands as an educational framework highly relevant to contemporary challenges, particularly in addressing the rise of extremism and polarization.

Discussion

Zuhri's paradigm of religious moderation demonstrates strong compatibility with global moderation frameworks developed by UNESCO, the OIC, and other international institutions. UNESCO emphasizes education for peace, intercultural dialogue, and the management of diversity as pillars of civilization. These principles have long been embedded in Zuhri's thought, particularly his insistence on social harmony and openness toward difference. The OIC, through its various declarations, also highlights the urgency of moderation, rejection of extremism, and understanding Islam as a religion that upholds justice and tolerance. Zuhri's ideas align closely with these orientations, as he positions Islam not as a source of conflict but as an ethical force that promotes peace and the advancement of society.

This alignment with global frameworks does not mean that Zuhri's thought is universal without local identity. On the contrary, his perspective has a distinctive character rooted deeply in the Indonesian historical experience: the integration of pesantren tradition and nationalism. This makes his model not only relevant to Indonesia but potentially inspirational for other nations.

The integration of pesantren and nationalism is the defining quality that distinguishes Zuhri's paradigm from models of moderation in other countries. For him, pesantren serve as centers of strong moral, spiritual, and intellectual formation. Meanwhile, nationalism represents the expression of Islamic values in the public sphere. By uniting the two, he presents a model of moderation that is authentic and grounded.

In Zuhri's view, pesantren are not isolated institutions separate from the state. Rather, they are strategic partners of the nation in strengthening character, cultivating morality, and educating citizens. Pesantren play a key role in planting the values of *tawassuth*, tasamuh, tawazun, and hubbul wathan from an early age. The close connection between pesantren and the nation in Zuhri's paradigm creates an approach to moderation that is not merely theoretical but based on social practice. Santri are not only educated in classical texts but are also encouraged to understand the realities of the nation and the importance of preserving unity.

Implementation of Education represents the concrete step in actualizing the MoNaREF model. This implementation is crucial to ensure that moderational values do not remain conceptual but truly shape the behavior and mindset of younger generations. One of the primary areas of implementation is the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. The PAI curriculum in schools occupies a strategic position because it reaches learners from diverse backgrounds. The MoNaREF model can serve as a foundational framework for developing learning materials, pedagogical strategies, and assessment approaches that support the formation of moderate character.

Within the PAI curriculum, moderational values can be integrated into lessons on ethics, jurisprudence, Islamic cultural history, and Qur'an-Hadith studies. For example, lessons on tolerance can be linked to the concept of *ukhuwah*, fiqh lessons can highlight legal flexibility, and history lessons can focus on the moderate scholars of Islam Nusantara. MoNaREF can also strengthen PAI teaching methods through interactive dialogue, diversity simulations, and case studies related to contemporary social issues. Such methods make learning not only informative but transformative.

Another arena for implementation is pesantren development. As traditional Islamic educational institutions, pesantren play a major role in shaping santri perspectives on religion and social life. MoNaREF offers renewed direction that strengthens the long-standing tradition of moderation within pesantren.

In the pesantren context, *bahtsul masail*, thematic discussions, and classical text studies can be directed toward deepening santri understanding of the importance of tolerance and social harmony. Pesantren may also organize interfaith visits or collaborative social programs with non-Muslim communities. Pesantren development based on MoNaREF will produce santri with broad religious insight and strong national commitment. They will not only master classical texts but also possess dialogical skills and social sensitivity.

The third area of implementation lies in universities, particularly within religious moderation programs that have become a national priority. Higher education institutions are strategic spaces for shaping students who are critical, moderate, and nationally conscious. In universities, MoNaREF can be integrated into required courses such as Islamic Education, Pancasila Education, or religious moderation subjects. Teaching can involve discussions, small-scale research, and community service projects that strengthen students' understanding of plurality.

Students may also engage in interfaith dialogues, tolerance seminars, and deradicalization workshops. These direct experiences help them understand social realities and enhance their ability to collaborate with individuals of different faiths. Moderation programs in universities become more effective when involving student organizations, both intra and extra campus. Collaborative activities build networks of moderation and expand the influence of MoNaREF values among young generations.

Thus, the educational implementation of the MoNaREF model, through the PAI curriculum, pesantren development, and moderation programs in higher education, creates an interconnected system. Together, these pathways enable the values of moderation to be internalized from early education through adulthood. This multi-layered implementation also becomes a strategy to produce a generation that not only understands moderation cognitively but embodies it in real-life actions. This is what makes MoNaREF a comprehensive and applicable model of moderational education.

Conclusion

This study concludes that KH. Saifuddin Zuhri's nationalist-religious paradigm provides a strong epistemological foundation for developing a contextualized model of religious moderation education in Indonesia. His intellectual construction, rooted in public ethics, religious nationalism, and the harmonious integration of religion and the state, offers a coherent response to rising extremism and polarization. Through historical-philosophical interpretation and constructive model building, this research formulated the MoNaREF framework, which translates Zuhri's values into operational educational components encompassing value foundations, pedagogical strategies, and social engagement. The framework demonstrates that Islamic religiosity and national identity can strengthen rather than negate each other, producing learners who are ethically grounded, critically aware, nationally committed, and resilient against radicalism. These findings affirm the relevance of Zuhri's thought for contemporary Islamic education and highlight its potential contribution to global discourses on religious moderation.

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