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## The Role of Government and Community in Supporting Religious Moderation Programs: A Survey Method

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### Abstract

Religious moderation is a trending topic that warrants study and research; however, the issue of understanding, actions, obstacles, and improvements, as well as its development, still cannot be measured properly. The purpose of this research is to explore and measure the understanding, actions, obstacles, and improvement, as well as the development of Religious Moderation. This research employs a survey method. The data sources are government employees, the community, and religious leaders in Madura. The results show that government employees, in supporting Religious Moderation, are 65% (neutral position). Meanwhile, in the realm of Action, there is up to 66.6% agreement with the concept of Religious Moderation. Among the obstacles to the implementation of Religious Moderation, there is a 65% figure in the preparation of the Religious Moderation strategy. The increase in the role of government employees in implementing Religious Moderation indicates that 67% falls within the realm of development. The development of Religious Moderation research shows that the subjects of Religious Moderation are students, the community, and the PAI curriculum, whereas current research focuses on government employees and the Religious Moderation program. This research provides a basis for government policymaking to design the Religious Moderation program more effectively.

**Keywords:** Religious Moderation; Government; Madura.

### Introduction

To foster religious harmony, religious moderation is crucial (Afwadzi et al., 2024). Given the diversity of the Indonesian population in terms of ethnicity, language, nation, and religion (Mahamid, 2023), such a condition, if improperly maintained, will become a potential for the emergence of exclusivism and extremism in religion (Madiyono & Haq, 2023), which causes division and discord among the ummah and even weakens the country (Aulia & Arifin, 2023). Religion-related conflict is a major issue (Yunus, 2014) that must be resolved right away to prevent division (Hanafi, 2018). According to the Qur'an and al-Hadith, religious moderation seeks to preserve religious harmony (Lee et al., 2022). Tolerance and religious moderation must be implemented in a balanced manner, as otherwise they will result in ruin (Nurdin, 2021).

The promotion of religious moderation in education (Manshur & Husni, 2020), religious moderation in Indonesian secondary schools (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021), religious moderation among Indonesian Muslims (Subchi et al., 2022), the relationship between religious moderation and the values of tolerance (Pajarianto et al., 2022), and religious moderation in the study of Islamic religious education textbooks (Putro et al., 2021) are just a number of

studies on the subject. From the promotion of the Religious Moderation program to the development of its concept, research has been conducted (Bakri et al., 2020).

While Benny's research on religious moderation in secondary schools is further supported by his research on religious moderation among Indonesian Muslims, Hadi's research on the relationship between religious moderation and tolerance, Rohmad's research on the implementation of religious moderation in the content of Islamic Religious Education books for school students, and Maskuri's research, which focuses on the concept of developing religious moderation is still within the scope of the concept, implementation, and development of Bergama moderation in the world of education and society. However, the topic of government employees' support for religious moderation has not been addressed in any of the studies. To address some of the shortcomings that currently exist, the researcher conducted this study from an alternative perspective, specifically regarding the role government employees play in monitoring religious moderation.

The purpose of this study is to determine how government employees support the implementation of the Religious Moderation program. This includes understanding behavioral patterns, challenges, and solutions, as well as development plans for government employees to oversee the Religious Moderation program in the Madura region. The study's findings are anticipated to offer tactical suggestions for boosting government workers' participation in the Religious Moderation program and lowering the likelihood that radicalism, intolerance, and extreme religious extremism will manifest in the community. This study also provides a general overview of the need for government employees to receive training and capacity-building to better socialize the Religious Moderation program. In the meantime, the social ramifications are expected to enhance societal diversity and foster a more welcoming, peaceful atmosphere.

## **Literature Review**

In contemporary Islamic studies, religious moderation has become a central topic of discussion, especially in plural societies where religious diversity intersects with social, political, and educational dynamics. Religious moderation in Indonesia is not just a theological idea but also a strategic framework intended to maintain social harmony, prevent extremism, and strengthen national cohesion. The concept emphasizes balance (*tawazun*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), justice (*i'tidal*), and accommodation of local culture, all of which serve as ethical foundations for peaceful coexistence in a society with many cultures. In response to the rise of religious extremism and exclusivity, a growing body of literature emphasizes the importance of religious moderation. According to Mahamid (2023), religious moderation is a strategic step to overcome religious polarization that endangers national unity. Similarly, places moderation in Qur'anic and prophetic teachings, emphasizing balance and proportionality as Islamic values in themselves. (Mahamid, 2023) According to these normative stances, religious moderation is a religious and civic duty, especially in countries with diverse cultural and religious settings. In the field of education, many studies have investigated the role of schools and institutions of higher education in encouraging religious moderation. Manshur shows that incorporating the principle of moderation into the learning process can encourage students' inclusive attitudes. According to Manshur & Husni (2020), higher education institutions serve as strategic sites for internalizing moderation through curriculum design and academic culture (Afwadzi &

Miski, 2021). Similarly, Rohmad Mulyana notes moderation values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) textbooks, including tolerance, anti-violence, and national commitment (Mulyana, 2023). However, due to limited instructional time and pedagogical constraints, these values are still not well implemented.

In addition, the research covers the social environment of students. Rifqi Muhammad emphasised the internalisation of moderation as an important ability for students, associating it with freedom, tolerance, and community obligations (Muhammad, 2021). However, he noted constant challenges, such as strong exclusive stories and limited institutional support. Nasrudin and Anwar found similar results, saying that students learn better about moderation. However, they emphasise that students lack sufficient socialisation and support systems outside the classroom (Nasrudin et al., 2024).

Research on religious moderation has become more focused on wider societal contexts than just educational institutions. Subchi investigated moderation among Indonesian Muslims and found that religious attitudes greatly affect social harmony (Subchi et al., 2022). The role of digital technology in creating religious language, and stated that, based on the strength of social control systems, rapid digitalisation can help or hinder moderation. According to this study, moderation is not just an educational issue; It is a social project that requires the participation of various sectors.

Many studies have focused on students, teachers, religious leaders, or community members as the primary agents of moderation, despite the rich body of literature available. Occupations of government employees, especially those working within the education bureaucracy, have yet to be studied. This is notable given that government employees serve as policy implementers, program supervisors, and a bridge between state policy and educational practice. Nunif and Qomar discuss religious moderation as a public policy initiative, noting that it works well when ministries and government agencies collaborate (Munif et al., 2023). However, their analysis still largely focuses on norms and policies, offering little empirical evidence on how government employees view, understand, and implement moderation programs in practice.

In addition, research on barriers to religious moderation often emphasises ideological resistance, fanaticism, or curricular limitations. For example, Teachers' workload and limited lesson time as obstacles in schools. Although these findings are useful, they ignore administrative and bureaucratic problems that government employees face, such as insufficient training, unclear role definitions, and lack of inter-agency coordination. Consequently, the operational aspect of religious moderation-especially the human resource aspect within government institutions-is still insufficiently theorised and empirically analysed.

### **Development of Religious Moderation Research**

Research on Religious Moderation has been conducted since the inception of this program and is widely pursued by several researchers. The following is the development of Religious Moderation research from 2020 to 2024 as explained in Table 1:

Table 1. The Progress of Religious Moderation Research Over the Past Few Years.

No.	Year	Object	Results	Constraints	References
1	2020	Students	The mainstreaming of the Religious Moderation program as a form of balance from the spread of tribalism in cyberspace in the Islamic university community in the digital era	Handling the spread of misinformation as opposed to moderation on social media, which is increasingly massive	<a href="#">(Afwadzi &amp; Miski, 2021)</a>
2	2020	Students	Religious Moderation and the scope of the study of the value of humans, religion, and nature.	Moderation is not only the task of Islamic religious education, but it is a joint task	<a href="#">(Aziz &amp; Najmudin, 2020)</a>
3	2021	Students	Internalization of Religious Moderation in the standard of students' independence competencies as the foundation of life for the sake of national commitment, tolerance, non-violence and accommodation to local culture	The lack of religious subject matter hours, the difficulty of eliminating the concept of exclusivism, and the lack of carrying capacity of the school environment.	<a href="#">(Muhammad, 2021)</a>
4	2021	Society	Religious Moderation Animation, challenges and obstacles	Social control is still needed	<a href="#">(Lee et al., 2022)</a>

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5	2022	Society	Fostering awareness of moderation in the era of the role of technology and the internet	The rapid development of digitalization needs to be balanced with good social control.	<a href="#">(Fadhli, 2025)</a>
6	2022	Society	Religious and family economic attitudes have a positive impact on Religious Moderation	Environmental influence and social media need to be protected from an early age	<a href="#">(Subchi et al., 2022)</a>
7	2023	Society	Universities have a role to grow moderate sikan in the community	The challenge of a country's diversity can be overcome by fostering a moderation attitude so that it can unite the nation, especially in the university environment	<a href="#">(Anzaikhan et al., 2023)</a>
8	2021	Students	The content of the values of Religious Moderation, such as anti-violence, justice, and tolerance is in line with the pillars of Religious Moderation	Optimization of PAI time at school needs to be improved to other schools	<a href="#">(Putro et al., 2021)</a>
9	2024	Students	Understanding of Religious Moderation of students increases, such as national commitment, anti- violence, accommodating to local culture	Socialization of Religious Moderation is less massive	<a href="#">(Nasrudin et al., 2024)</a>
10	2024	Students	The promotion of Religious Moderation by equating the terms between Religious Moderation and tolerance, provides legitimacy for the Qur'an and hadith that support Religious Moderation	Understanding of religious texts must be strengthened for greater Acceptance of Religious Moderation	<a href="#">(Afwadzi et al., 2024)</a>

11	2024	Government Employees	Religious Moderation has not been fully understood by government officials	There has not been a sharing of the Religious Moderation program between ministries	<a href="#">Present study</a>
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Table 1 outlines some developments in Religious Moderation research over the past few years. This research covers a wide range of subjects, from students and communities to government employees, with the main objective of exploring how Religious Moderation is applied and the challenges it faces across different social contexts.

The 2020 research, the object is Students (first and second research in 2020) the main focus of this research is how Religious Moderation can be applied among students in the context of Islamic universities in the digital era. The first study revealed the importance of mainstreaming the Religious Moderation program to balance the impact of the growing spread of tribalism in cyberspace. This shows that social media plays an important role in shaping public understanding of religion, especially in academic settings. The second study emphasises that Religious Moderation is not the sole responsibility of Islamic religious education, but rather a joint task involving various parties. These results show the importance of collaboration in creating an inclusive and comprehensive understanding of moderation.

Research in 2021 focuses on students and the community; it shows two main aspects in the development of Religious Moderation. First, research conducted among students reveals the importance of internalising the values of Religious Moderation in education, which serves as a foundation for building nationality, tolerance, and non-violence. However, the main obstacles are the limited hours for religious lessons and the dominance of exclusivism, which remains strong in many schools. A second study from the same year, which focused more on society, found that although Religious Moderation animation has great potential, strong social control remains indispensable to overcoming existing challenges and barriers. This research shows that social interaction within the community needs to be maintained to ensure that the values of Religious Moderation can grow properly.

Research in 2022: the object is society; it highlights the impact of the digital era on awareness of Religious Moderation. In the first study, it was explained that the rapid development of technology and the internet requires better social control to overcome their negative impacts. This illustrates the importance of a balance between digital progress and the formation of a moderate attitude in society. Another study that year shows that religious attitudes and family economic conditions can play a positive role in supporting Religious Moderation. However, the influence of an unfavorable social environment and social media is a challenge that needs to be addressed through protection from an early age.

Research in 2023 focuses on the community and students; it shows that universities play an important role in fostering a moderate attitude in society. Universities, as educational institutions, have the capacity to be a unifying force in addressing the challenges posed by the State's diversity. This study suggests that higher education should emphasize the value of moderation to strengthen social cohesion. Another study in the same year revealed the importance of the value of Religious Moderation in the school curriculum, such as anti-violence and tolerance. The obstacle faced is the limited time for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons in schools, which need to be extended to other schools to create a greater impact.

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Research in 2024 on students and Government employees shows that understanding of Religious Moderation among students is increasing, although there are still shortcomings in broader socialisation. This indicates that, despite progress in understanding Religious Moderation, counselling and dissemination efforts for these values still need to be strengthened.

Research on government employees shows that Religious Moderation is not fully understood by them. The obstacle is the lack of a coordinated Religious Moderation program across ministries, underscoring the importance of joint efforts among government agencies to strengthen its implementation in the public sector.

Overall, this study describes the various dimensions of the development of Religious Moderation in the community, from students to government employees, with a primary focus on education and social control. The obstacles faced include limited resources, the influence of social media, exclusivism, and a lack of collaboration between institutions. Despite the many challenges, these findings show that Religious Moderation is increasingly important in creating social balance amid digital developments and societal diversity.

The importance of government employees increases in areas with high religious cohesion, such as Madura. High religious uniformity can create both opportunities and risks: opportunities for strengthening shared values, and risks of exclusivism if moderation is not actively promoted. However, current research rarely places moderation programs in such sociocultural environments. The majority of empirical research adopts a national or city-level perspective, so peripheral or culturally distinctive areas are less discussed in academic literature.

This research focuses on the role of government employees as key actors in supporting religious moderation programs in schools to close these gaps. This study differs from previous research that emphasized conceptual frameworks or educational content. It focuses on understanding, actions, obstacles faced, and strategies for improvement. By adopting this perspective, research contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it broadens the field of religious moderation studies to include administrative and bureaucratic actors as well as pedagogical and community-based approaches. Second, it enhances contextual understanding of moderation practices by providing empirical evidence from a culturally distinctive region. Third, it bridges policy discourse and implementation by examining how those responsible for moderation programs interpret and operationalize them.

Thus, this literature review is an important and appropriate contribution to Islamic studies, political education research, and broader discussions on religious moderation in plural societies. In addition, previous research has not sufficiently examined the role of government workers as strategic actors in the education system.

### **Research Method**

#### **Study Area**

This research was conducted using the survey method with a quantitative descriptive approach. Sampling of respondents was conducted in the Madura area of East Java Province, Indonesia, which comprises 4 districts (Sumenep, Pamekasan, Sampang, and Bangkalan).

Madura's election is due to the characteristics of its people: 99.90% adhere to Islam, and the remaining 0.10% follow other religions (Statistik, 2025). So, this has great potential to give rise to the idea of exclusivism and radicalism in the name of religion. By designating the Madura area as the research location, it is hoped that this will provide a representative picture of the role of government employees in supporting the implementation of the Religious Moderation program.

### **Questioner development**

In this study, a structured questionnaire was used to examine knowledge, actions, obstacles, and increasing the role of government employees, community leaders, and religious leaders towards Religious Moderation. The questionnaire is designed in five parts: 1) contains respondent demographics, 2) contains knowledge, 3) action, 4) obstacles, and 5) increases the role of Religious Moderation.

### **Structure of the survey data**

The survey questionnaire was conducted from July to December 2024. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire. Each respondent was randomly selected to complete the questionnaire while adhering to the principles of objectivity and validity. The members of this study are lecturers and some students, so they are involved in data collection. Previously, they were provided with training in survey data collection techniques. In this study, 20 respondents were tested in advance to avoid potential misinterpretations.

In total, 125 respondents were obtained at random. After excluding incomplete and problematic questionnaires, the final sample size was 120 with an effectiveness rate of 96%. The questionnaire includes single-choice questions. The answers to these questions are divided into standard (knowledge) and non-standard (Actions, barriers, and role enhancement plans). The answer score starts from a score of 5 for the answer (strongly agree) and a score of 1 for the answer (strongly disagree) (Deng et al., 2020).

### **Response outcome and statistical analysis**

In this study, the dependent variable is government employees' understanding of Religious Moderation across five dimensions: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. For variable dependents, the question to respondents about what they want to do to develop Religious Moderation, with all options, carries equal weight. The respondents can choose which behavioral patterns to exhibit in accordance with their consciences. After summing, the equal distance distribution method is used to divide the willingness to succeed in Religious Moderation (T) from low to high into five levels (1-5), namely:

T = 1 - strongly disagree T = 2 - disagree

T = 3 - neutral T = 4 - agree

T = 5 - strongly agree

There are 15 independent variables, including Actions, challenges, obstacles and the development of the role of Religious Moderation. This assessment method was used to calculate respondents' knowledge of Religious Moderation. In the questionnaire, 5 questions were designed to assess knowledge of Religious Moderation, each worth 1 point. The weight of each option is equal in the multiple-choice question. After summing up, the knowledge score

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is divided into five levels (1-5), from low to high, with equal intervals. In the model, P1-P5 represent the probability of government employees' willingness to succeed in the Religious Moderation program, and x1-x20 represent the 20 independent variables identified in the study (Deng, L., Cai, L., Sun, F., Li, G., & Che, 2020).

**Results**

**Demographics Respond**

Respondent demographics are important to be presented in this study to help understand the characteristics of respondents who, in this case, are Madura government employees in supporting Religious Moderation, and then to identify the patterns and trends of respondents, which can then be used as a basis for decision-making and accuracy in facilitating strategic planning. The following is a table of respondent demographic data.

Table 2. Demography Response.

NO	ITEM	RESPONDENTS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
1	Number of Respondents	Government Employees	120	100%
2	Age	20-39 years old	40	33,3%
		40-59 years old	80	66,6%
3	Types of Other	Male	60	50%
		Women	60	50%
4	Education	SMA	20	16,6%
		S1 Bachelor	80	66%
		S2 Magister	15	12,5%
		S3 Doctor	5	4,1%
5	Profession	Local Government Employees	30	25%
		Ministry of Education and Culture Officials	30	25%
		Ministry of Religion Employees	60	50%
6	Income	Above Rp. 5,000,000,-	60	50%
		Below Rp. 5,000,000,-	60	50%
7	Marital Status	Unmarried	6	5%
		Married	100	83%
		Duda/ Janda	14	11,6%
8	Location	São Paulo	30	25%
		Pamekasan	30	25%
		Sampang	30	25%
		BANGKALAN	30	25%

Table 2 contains data on the demographic challenge of respondents, consisting of the number of Madura government employees and 120 respondents with an average age of 20-39 years of 80 people with a percentage of 33.3%, while the age of 40-59 years amounted to 80 people or 66.6% of the total number of respondents. Of the genders, there are 60 men and 60 women, for a total of 120 and a 50% share each. The number of respondents with a high school

education amounted to 20 people or 16.6%, and employees with S1/Bachelor education consisted of 80 people with a total percentage of 66%, for those who were masters / S2 there were 15 people with a representation of 12.5%, and for respondents with a Doctorate / S3 education, there were 5 people with 4.1%. The number of respondents by professional status was 30 (25%): local government employees; 30 (25%): employees of the Ministry of Education and Culture; and 60 (50%): employees of the Ministry of Religion in the Madura work area. In terms of income, the number of respondents with an income above Rp. 5,000,000 amounted to 60 people, or 50%, while the number of respondents with an income above 5,000,000 was 60 people, or 50%. The number of respondents with unmarried status was 6 (5%), married status 100 (83%), and widower status 14 (11.6%).

Other characteristics of respondents, such as ethnicity, religion, language, and nationality, can be presented as follows:

Table 3. The Number of Respondents in terms of Ethnicity, Religion, Language, and

<i>No</i>	<i>Item</i>	Nationality	
		<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Number</i> <i>Percentage</i>
1	Ethnicity	Mature	100    83,3%
		Outside Madura	20    16,6%
2	Religion	Islam	118    98,3%
		Non-Islam	2    1,6%
3	Language	Indonesia	100    100%
4	Nationality	Indonesia	100    100%

Table 3 shows the number of respondents from the Madura ethnic group, 100 (83.3%), and those from outside Madura, 20 (16.6%). In terms of religion, the number of respondents who were Muslim was 118 (98.3%), and those of other religions were 2 (2.4%). Meanwhile, in terms of development and language, 100% of the respondents are Indonesian and understand Indonesian.

As for the number of respondents reviewed from their health conditions, work experience and employment status, they can be presented as follows:

Table 4. Health Conditions, Work Experience, and Employment Status.

<i>No</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>They respond</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Health Conditions	Healthy	120	100%
2	Work Experience	Under 5 years old	10	8,3%
		Over 5 years old	110	91,6%
3	Employment Status	Honorary Employee	30	25%
		Government Employees with Employment Agreements (PPPK)	40	33,3%
		Civil Servant (PNS)	50	41,6%

Table 4 shows the number of employees who are 100% respondents in the healthy condition. In terms of work experience, 110 people (91.6%) have worked for more than 5

years, while the remaining 10 (8.3%) have worked for less than 5 years. If viewed by employment status, 30 respondents (25%) are honorary employees, 40 (33.3%) are Government Employees with Employment Agreements (PPPK), and 50 (41.6%) are Civil Servants.

**Knowledge**

The respondents' knowledge and understanding of Religious Moderation is the first aspect that the researcher wants to find, so that the results of the questionnaire distribution that the researcher has successfully collected, are presented as follows:

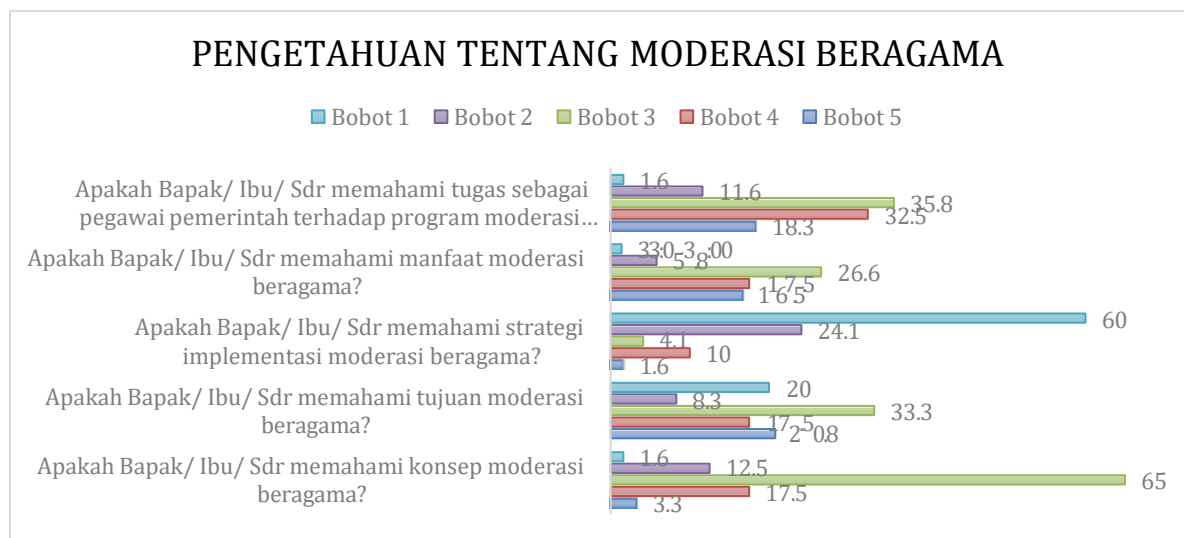


Figure 1. Respondents' Knowledge of Religious Moderation.

Figure 1 is a table showing respondents' knowledge of Religious Moderation, collected through the questionnaire data-collection method. From the exposure of the thick data, it can be seen that the understanding of government employees about Religious Moderation has a religious pattern, such as the understanding of the concept of Religious Moderation shows (understand 1.6%), (understand 12.5%), (Neutral 65%), (do not understand 17.5%), (do not understand 3.3%). Regarding understanding the purpose of Religious Moderation, the data showed the following: strongly agree (20%), agree (8.3%), neutral (33.3%), disagree (17.5%), and strongly disagree (20.8%). Focusing on the question of understanding the Religious Moderation strategy shows the following data: (Strongly agree 60%), (Agree 24.1%), (Neutral 4.1%), (Disagree 10%), (Strongly disagree 1.6%). Meanwhile, to understand the benefits of Religious Moderation, data were collected on responses to the following: strongly agree (33.3%), agree (5.6%), neutral (26.6%), disagree (17.5%), and strongly disagree (16.5%). The understanding of duties as a government employee towards Religious Moderation shows the following data: (Strongly agree 1.6%), (agree 11.6%), (neutral 35.8%), (disagree 32.5%), (strongly disagree 18.3%). Such a data pattern is caused by the respondents who fill out the questionnaire are government employees in the Madura region with the status of belonging as local government employees, dikdasmen employees, employees of the Ministry of Religion

and others, meanwhile, the pilot project of this Religious Moderation program is the ministry of religion, so it is natural that these government employees do not understand the whole related to the Religious Moderation program.

Previous research has been conducted by Ahmad Zainuri and Mohammad Fahri, that religious radicalism or violence in the name of religion can only be eradicated with the application of moderate and inclusive Islam, because in it there are educational values that teach attitudes *Tawazzu* (balanced), *Itidal* (firm, straight), *tasammuh* (tolerance), *São Paulo* (egaliter), *musawarah* (musawarah), *islah* (reformasi), *Aulawiyah* (prioritize first) *Tathawwur wa ibtikar* (dynamic and innovative). (Mohammad Fahri, 2020) The results of this research are only theoretical and do not provide concrete (quantitative) evidence or data that can serve as a reference to strengthen the implementation of the Religious Moderation program. While the current research is to explore the understanding of government employees in the Madura region of their point of view and understanding of Religious Moderation, because these government employees are the spearhead of the success of the Religious Moderation program launched by the government, so it is important to know the extent to which government employees support the success of the Religious Moderation program in Madura.

**Actions**

This study also measures the actions of the respondents who, in this case, are government employees in the Madura region.

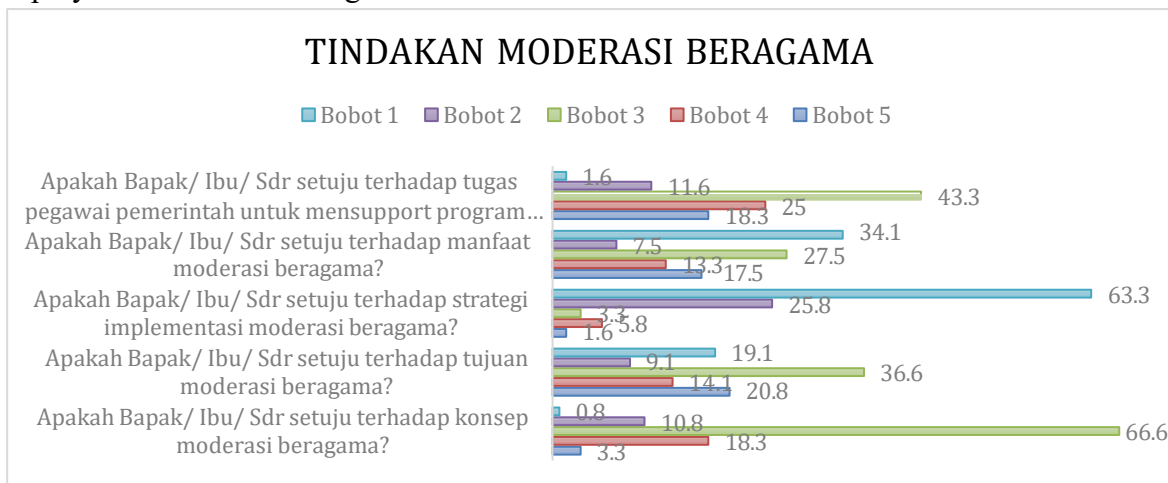


Figure 2. Government employees respons in supporting the Religious Moderation program

Figure 2 presents the results of research on government employees' actions in supporting the Religious Moderation program in Madura. The data pattern obtained shows that in terms of acting in order to support Religious Moderation, there are very diverse variations, such as agreeing with the concept of Religious Moderation (strongly agreeing 0.8%), (agreeing 10.8%), (neutral 66.6%), (disagreeing 18.3%), (strongly disagreeing 33.3%). Meanwhile, at the level of goals, Religious Moderation shows the following: strongly agree (19.1%), agree (9.1%), neutral (36.6%), disagree (14.1%), strongly disagree (20.8%). On the question about the strategy of Religious Moderation, the responses were: (Strongly agree 63.3%), (agree 25.8%), (neutral 3.3%), (disagree 5.8%), (strongly disagree 1.6%). Meanwhile, the question about approval of the use of Religious Moderation shows that (strongly agree 34.1%), (agree 7.5%), (neutral 27.5%), (disagree 13.3%), (strongly disagree 17.5%). And at the level of government

employees' duties regarding Religious Moderation support, data shows (Strongly agree 1.6%), (agree 11.6%), (neutral 43.3%), (disagree 25%), (strongly disagree 18.3%). The data pattern indicating a neutral average is the lack of extensive socialization of the Religious Moderation program among government employees, because the target is only employees in the Ministry of Religion, and others have not.

Research on the praxis of Religious Moderation has also been carried out by others, such as the research conducted by Pribadyo Prakosa, the results of his research show that in general people do not know the concept of Religious Moderation in its entirety, but practically they have realized it, so the recommendations of the research need to be socialized and realized in terms of understanding and practice starting from each religious community in Indonesia.(Scott, 2022) While the research currently conducted shows that the action and implementation of Religious Moderation neutrality is the highest weight, which shows a figure of 66.6% which means that respondents are in the middle of the implementation of the Religious Moderation program but their attitude is still in a position of agreement, this condition is caused by socialization that is not optimal so that they do not know the whole of Religious Moderation, but in implementation, they are quite agreeable to Religious Moderation for the sake of peace and harmony among religious people.

### Barriers

Every work program carried out by an individual or a group will inevitably face a setback that can impede the program's success, including in the area of Religious Moderation. Therefore, the researcher searched for this by distributing several questionnaires to the respondents, and the following are the results of processed data obtained in the field, presented in the form of the following graph:

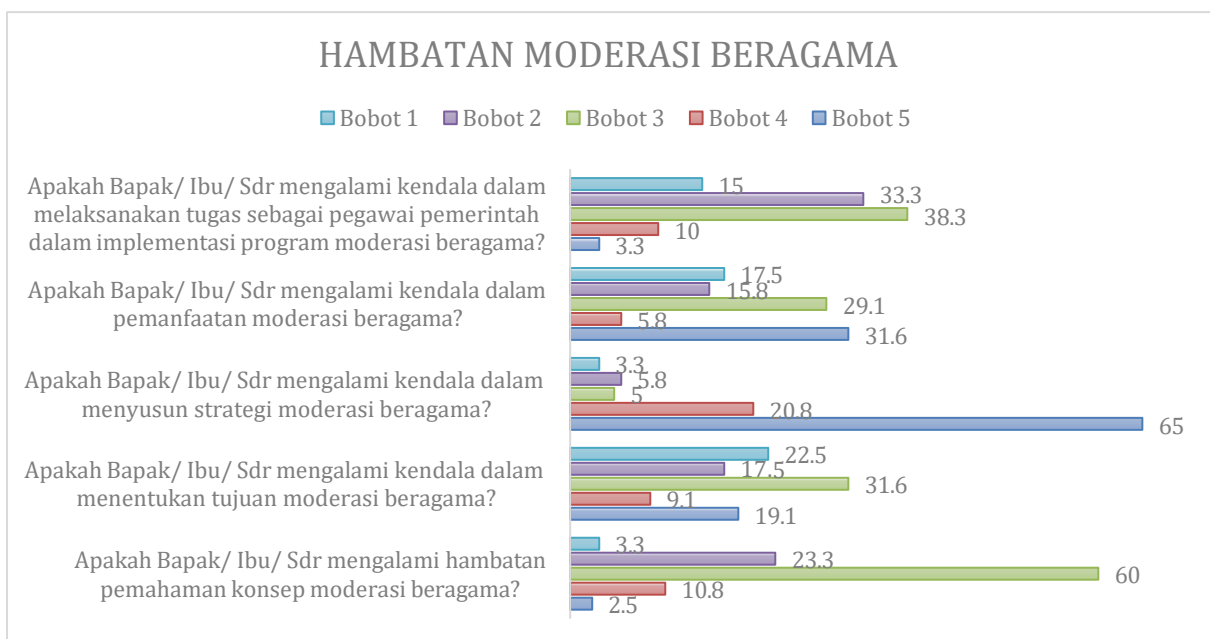


Figure 3. The Obstacles of Religious Moderation Program.

Figure 3 is a presentation of the results of research on the obstacles faced by government employees in an effort to optimize their role in maximizing the Religious Moderation program.

The table is presented as a percentage of processed data collected in the field. Regarding obstacles to the concept of Religious Moderation, the following responses were obtained: strongly agree (33.3%), agree (23.3%), neutral (60%), disagree (10.8%), and strongly disagree (2.5%). On the question of obstacles to the purpose of Religious Moderation, data were obtained (strongly agree 22.5%), (agree 17.5%), (neutral 31.6%), (disagree 9.1%), (strongly disagree 19.1%). Regarding obstacles to preparing the Religious Moderation strategy, the following responses were obtained: strongly agree (3.3%), agree (5.8%), neutral (5%), disagree (20.8%), and strongly disagree (6.5%). Regarding obstacles to the use of Religious Moderation, data were obtained: (strongly agree 17.5%), (agree 15.8%), (neutral 29.1%), (disagree 5.8%), (strongly disagree 31.6%). Regarding obstacles to the implementation of Religious Moderation, the following responses were obtained: strongly agree (15%), agree (33.3%), neutral (38.3%), disagree (10%), and strongly disagree (3.3%). The data pattern that varies between several questions to the respondents shows that the behavior of each respondent is very religious, ranging from understanding constraints to technical constraints, so that the pattern shows dependence on the individual government employee, if the government employee in the coordination of the ministry of religion on average the obstacle is a technical problem, because conceptually and understanding the moderation must be strong, while for other employees it must be The obstacle is in the problem of understanding and technicality because they are still untouched, especially in the technical issue of the implementation of Religious Moderation.

The obstacles to the implementation of moderation have been researched by others, namely Husnul Muamalah et al, the results of their research show that the obstacles faced in the implementation of Religious Moderation in schools are the high level of fanaticism and the lack of time allocation of religious education in schools,(Husnul Muamalah, 2024) so that in line with the findings of this study that the obstacles to the implementation of Religious Moderation have several obstacles and obstacles such as conceptual constraints, goals, strategies, utilization and implementation of the duties of government employees in the implementation of Religious Moderation in Madura.

### **Increasing the role of government employees**

The plan to increase the role of government employees in the implementation of Religious Moderation can be explained as follows:

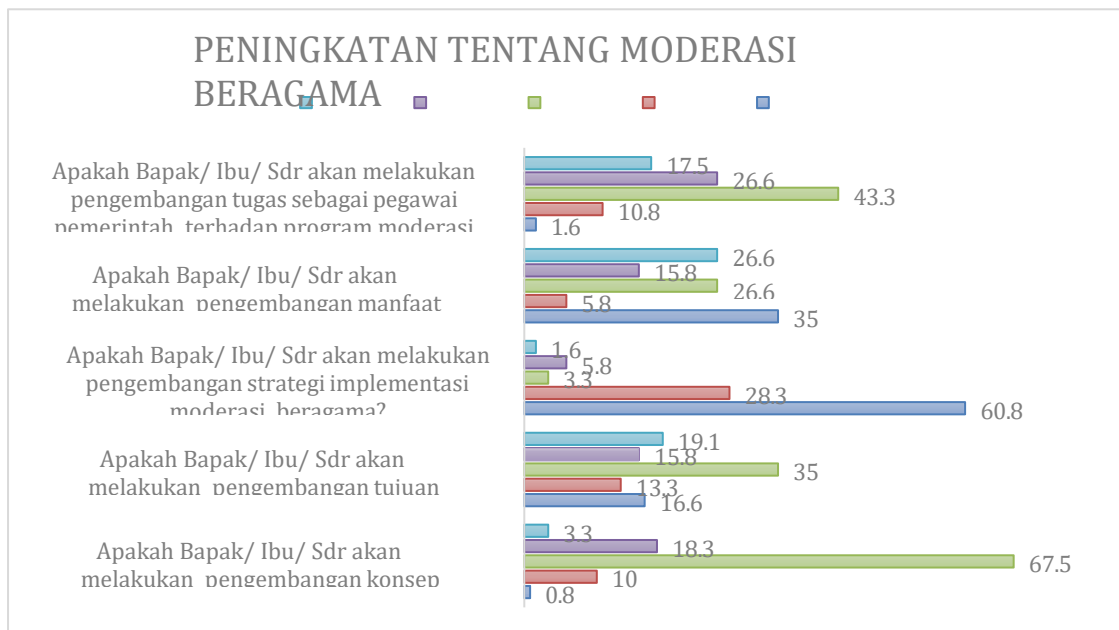


Figure 4. The increasing role of Government employees in supporting Religious Moderation in Madura.

The table above presents the results of data processing from respondents regarding the increasing role of government employees in supporting Religious Moderation in Madura. The data presentation was represented by several questionnaires, which included the development of the concept of moderation, the development of the goals of Religious Moderation, the development of Religious Moderation strategies, the development of the benefits of Religious Moderation, and the development of the duties of government employees in the implementation of Religious Moderation. The data above show that the development of the concept of moderation was based on the following responses: strongly agree (2.3%), agree (18.3%), neutral (67.5%), disagree (10%), strongly disagree (0.8%). The development of the goals of Religious Moderation was obtained data (Strongly agree 19.1%), (agree 15.8%), (neutral 35%), (disagree 13.3%), (strongly disagree 16.6%), Development of the Religious Moderation strategy obtained data (Strongly agree 1.5%), (agree 5.8%), (neutral 3.3%), (disagree 28.3%), (strongly disagree 60.8%), Development of the benefits of Religious Moderation obtained data (Strongly agree 26.6%), (agree 15.8%), (neutral 26.6%), (disagree 5.8%), (strongly disagree 35%) and the development of the duties of government employees in the implementation of Religious Moderation were obtained data (strongly agree 17.5%), (agree 26.6%), (neutral 43.3%), (disagree 10.8%), (strongly disagree 1.6%).

The increasing role of government employees in supporting Religious Moderation has been examined by several previous researchers, including the Religious Moderation policy in Indonesia (M. Nunif, Mujammil Qomar, 2023). The results of the study stated that this Religious Moderation program must be carried out jointly both by the government and various levels of ministries and society, because this Religious Moderation does have several advantages and some weaknesses and opportunities in creating harmony among the people, meanwhile, the results of this study show that efforts to develop the concept, goals, and strategies of Religious Moderation by involving government employees show a neutral

attitude. Therefore, it is necessary to optimize the government's approach to this program to produce Religious Moderation products that meet expectations.

### **Discussion**

This study reveals several important insights regarding the role of government employees in supporting religious moderation programs in schools, particularly within the socio-religious context of Madura. The findings show that government employees' understanding of religious moderation remains predominantly neutral (65%), while their actions tend to reflect a moderate level of agreement with religious moderation principles. According to Nunif & Qomar, these findings support previous research emphasizing that conversations about religious moderation are spread unevenly across different areas of the organization. (Munif et al., 2023) Although religious moderation has been widely advocated as a national agenda, its socialization appears to be focused on particular ministries, leaving other government sectors uninformed. The result is that although government employees generally support moderation in principle, they lack a deep understanding of the basic concepts and practices of the objectives, strategies, and success indicators of moderation.

It was surprising that, despite the lack of understanding, the action dimension showed more agreement (66.6%) with religious moderation practices. This suggests that the value of moderation may already exist in society and culture, even if it is not explicitly defined as part of formal government programs. This correlates with Prakosa's claim that moderation is often practiced instinctively in daily social interactions, even when people don't know its formal terms. Communal harmony, respect for religious authority, and local wisdom seem to serve as informal mechanisms supporting moderate religious practices in Madura. However, relying on indirect cultural norms alone is insufficient to address contemporary challenges such as digital radicalization and ideological polarization. A structural problem related to role ambiguity is also reflected by the persistent neutrality in both understanding and action. According to many, religious moderation is solely the responsibility of religious institutions or the Ministry of Religious Affairs, rather than a shared responsibility among various government sectors. In this way, cross-sectoral ownership becomes weaker, and the values of moderation become more difficult to incorporate into education management, school administration, and policy oversight. From a governance perspective, this suggests the need for clearer roles and inter-ministerial coordination to ensure that religious moderation is treated as a collective responsibility rather than a sectoral effort.

The results on the barrier support this interpretation. Limited strategic guidance, insufficient training, and a lack of coordination among institutions are the main obstacles identified by respondents. Previous research has emphasized the limitations of techniques and management in implementing religious moderation. These issues add a new aspect by showing that the obstacles are not only pedagogical or ideological but also administrative. To support the moderation of school programs, government employees need not only normative approval but also practical tools, political explanations, and institutional support. In addition, differences in perceptions of the challenges faced by different groups of government employees indicate that there are no equal opportunities to be informed and upskilled. Employees from the Ministry of Religious Affairs usually find technical issues, while employees from other sectors have trouble understanding concepts. This variation shows how important it is to include inclusive

capacity-building efforts that target all relevant parties, especially those working in education management and policy oversight. In the absence of such an effort, religious moderation risks becoming a symbolic rule rather than a transformational practice.

In addition, outcomes related to the development and improvement of government employees' roles should be considered. Regarding future development strategies, the predominance of neutral responses (67%) suggests uncertainty rather than resistance. This neutrality can be thought of as a latent potential that has not yet been activated by systematic intervention. In other words, government employees are not opposed to taking a greater role in religious settings; However, they need a clearer system, motivation, and official rules to do so. This interpretation is in line with the theory of the application of the law, which emphasizes the importance of clarity, capability, and the implementer's commitment.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study shifts the analytical focus from normative ideals and educational content to institutional actors and governance mechanisms. This contributes to the discourse on religious moderation. Previously, research has placed moderation as a pedagogical or theological project, emphasizing curriculum, teaching materials, and student attitudes. However, while these elements are still important, they suggest that the success of religious moderation also depends on the administrative ecosystem that supports education. Government employees serve as intermediaries between the creation and implementation of legislation, meaning they understand and are involved in essential sustainability programs.

These findings suggest that religious moderation should be conceptualized as an integrated governance agenda in the broader context of Islamic studies and public policy. For effective moderation, principles, institutions, and practices must be appropriate. Schools, teachers, students, and communities cannot function without administrative structures that control curriculum, allocate resources, and monitor its execution. Therefore, increasing the role of government employees is not just a technical change; It is a strategic move to ensure that religious moderation becomes part of the institutional culture and goes beyond rhetoric.

Overall, this conversation highlights the need for a multifaceted approach to maximize the role of government employees in supporting religious moderation programs. Conceptual clarity, institutional coordination, capacity building, and policy integration must all be addressed simultaneously. This study sheds light on these dynamics within the context of Madura. It offers useful insights for policymakers, educators, and scholars working to advance religious moderation as a sustainable, inclusive project for the nation.

## **Conclusion**

This study aims to explore the role of Madura government employees in contributing to the success of the Religious Moderation program, as the implication is a peaceful, comfortable, tolerant, harmonious, and moderate environment. The results of the study show that government employees, in supporting Religious Moderation in Madura, are 65% (neutral position). Meanwhile, in the realm of Action, there is up to 66.6% agreement with the concept of Religious Moderation. Among the obstacles to the implementation of Religious Moderation, there is a 65% figure in the preparation of the Religious Moderation strategy. The increase in the role of government employees in implementing Religious Moderation indicates that 67%

falls within the realm of development. The development of Religious Moderation research shows that the objects of Religious Moderation are students to students, the community, the PAI curriculum, while the current research is on government employees and the Religious Moderation program. The next research recommendation is to compare the Madura region with other regions in the implementation of Religious Moderation; government policies and program evaluation can be carried out by the next researcher.

### Declaration of conflicting interest

The author (Supandi) declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. This research was conducted independently and objectively, without any financial, personal, institutional, or political relationships that could influence the research process, data interpretation, or the conclusions presented in this study. The views and findings expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of any affiliated institutions or government agencies.

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