

Exploring the New Path of Religious Moderation: Haedar Nashir and Its Implications for Muhammadiyah Education

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ABSTRACT

Religious moderation has emerged as a crucial paradigm for addressing the challenges of religious life within Indonesia's pluralistic society, particularly amidst rising social polarization, the evolution of digital technology, and the emergence of various forms of religious extremism. This article aims to analyze Haedar Nashir's concept of religious moderation and its implications for the development of Muhammadiyah education. The study employs a library research method with a qualitative-descriptive approach, examining relevant academic literature, books, organizational documents, and scholarly publications concerning religious moderation, *Islam Berkemajuan* (Progressive Islam), and Islamic education. The findings indicate that, from Haedar Nashir's perspective, religious moderation is not interpreted as a compromise of religious principles; rather, it represents an effort to manifest an Islam grounded in the values of *wasathiyah* (moderation), balance, justice, humanity, and progress. This line of thought is rooted in Muhammadiyah's *Islam Berkemajuan* paradigm, which positions religion as a force for social transformation through education, science, humanitarian service, and civilizational advancement. Within the context of Muhammadiyah education, Haedar Nashir's ideas on moderation hold strategic implications for strengthening integrative curricula, fostering dialogic and contextual learning, enhancing educator competence, and cultivating students who are religious, critical, tolerant, and socially conscious. Thus, Haedar Nashir's concept of religious moderation can be understood as a religious paradigm capable of harmonizing Islamic commitment, social openness, and national responsibility in the pursuit of an inclusive and progressive model of Islamic education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a nation characterized by a highly pluralistic society (Dias, 2024), spanning religious, cultural, ethnic, and social-traditional dimensions. While this diversity serves as a major asset in nation-building, it simultaneously presents serious challenges when differences are interpreted exclusively and framed as sources of conflict. Within the realm of religious life, advancements in information technology, the accelerating pace of globalization, and the emergence of various transnational religious movements have significantly altered how society perceives and expresses religiosity. Consequently, the discourse on religious moderation has become a pivotal theme in contemporary Islamic studies in Indonesia.

This article specifically examines religious moderation through the lens of Haedar Nashir, given his profound influence on Muhammadiyah education. Previous studies on Haedar Nashir's thought have largely focused on the concept of *Islam Berkemajuan* (Progressive Islam), religious moderation, and their relevance to Islamic education. Research by Dias (2024) explores Haedar Nashir's concept of *Islam Berkemajuan*, focusing on reform, modernization, and the integration of Islamic values with contemporary developments; meanwhile, Ramadan dan Khoirudin (2024) discuss his views on religious moderation and their implications for the concept of progressive Islamic education, emphasizing the reinforcement of tolerance, justice, and balance within the educational process. Additionally, a study by Suriyati et al. (2025) analyzes Haedar Nashir's perspective on Muhammadiyah through the framework of progressive Islamic scholarship. Unlike earlier studies that tend to address religious moderation and Islamic education primarily at a conceptual level, this article focuses specifically on exploring Haedar Nashir's thought as a novel pathway for religious moderation. It further analyzes the specific implications of these ideas for the future direction of Muhammadiyah education—an institution dedicated to shaping individuals who are progressive, inclusive, and of strong character amidst the challenges of social change and the digitalization of education.

In reality, religious moderation is not merely a concept of compromise in religious practice; rather, it is a paradigm of religiosity that prioritizes balance, justice, tolerance, and respect for humanity as its core principles. Religious moderation seeks to foster an understanding of Islam that avoids the pitfalls of religious extremism—whether in the form of insular conservatism or a liberalism that divorces religion from its fundamental values. From an Islamic perspective, moderation is closely linked to the concept of *wasathiyah*, which refers to a balanced, just, and proportionate approach to understanding and practicing religious teachings (Kemenag RI, 2021).

In the evolution of Islamic thought in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah stands out as a major Islamic organization that has significantly contributed to shaping the concept

of religious moderation. Since its inception in 1912, Muhammadiyah has cultivated a style of Islamic practice that emphasizes renewal (*tajdid*), rationality, education, social service, and active engagement in national life. Muhammadiyah operates not only in the realm of *dakwah* (religious outreach) but also establishes various educational, healthcare, and social institutions as a means of actualizing Islamic values aimed at the advancement of human civilization (Mu'ti, 2021a).

In the context of Muhammadiyah's contemporary development, the ideas of Haedar Nashir—as the General Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Board—represent a significant contribution to redefining the direction of religious moderation. Haedar Nashir views religious moderation as a "middle path" that does not entail compromising religious principles; instead, it reinforces the core Islamic values that foster public well-being, peace, and progress. For him, moderation—or *wasathiyah*—is not an attitude that validates all views without limit, but rather the capacity to maintain balance when navigating differences and the changing times (Nashir, 2021b).

Haedar Nashir's thoughts on religious moderation are rooted in the paradigm of "Progressive Islam" (Islam Berkemajuan), which serves as Muhammadiyah's intellectual identity. Progressive Islam posits that Islamic teachings must be capable of addressing modern humanitarian issues through the advancement of knowledge, education, community empowerment, and the strengthening of moral values. Islam is understood not merely as a system of individual belief but also as a source of social ethics that fosters a civilized society. From this perspective, religious moderation is an integral part of Muhammadiyah's mission to embody an Islam that is a mercy to all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*) (Nashir, 2022b).

Haedar Nashir's ideas on moderation have become increasingly relevant as Indonesian society confronts various phenomena of socio-religious polarization. Divergent political choices, the rise of religiously motivated hate speech, the dissemination of invalid religious information via digital media, and growing intolerance present challenges that require a more constructive religious approach. Haedar Nashir emphasizes that addressing extremism cannot be achieved through opposing forms of extremism; rather, it requires fostering a religious understanding that is critical, dialogical, and human-centric.

Education serves as a strategic arena for implementing Muhammadiyah's ideas on religious moderation. Muhammadiyah's educational system holds a pivotal position, acting as a primary instrument for shaping the character of a Muslim generation that possesses both Islamic insight and a strong sense of national identity. Through its thousands of educational institutions—ranging from primary schools to universities—Muhammadiyah has a significant opportunity to instill values of

moderation, such as tolerance, openness to knowledge, respect for diversity, social responsibility, and a spirit of progress.

Muhammadiyah education aims not only to produce individuals with academic proficiency but also to cultivate people with a "progressive character" (*karakter berkemajuan*). Consequently, Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation have significant implications for the development of the Muhammadiyah educational paradigm, particularly regarding curriculum, school culture, educator competencies, and student character building. Recent studies indicate that Muhammadiyah's Islamic moderation extends beyond normative concepts, manifesting instead through various practical fields such as education, social services, and the strengthening of national life (Rohman, 2025).

Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to explore the new pathways of religious moderation found in Haedar Nashir's thought and analyze their implications for Muhammadiyah education. This study is significant because religious moderation serves not merely as a response to issues of intolerance and extremism but also as a strategic paradigm for establishing an Islamic education system capable of meeting the challenges of the times. A deeper understanding of Haedar Nashir's ideas reveals how Muhammadiyah offers a model of religious practice that integrates Islamic commitment, humanitarian values, and national responsibility..

2. METHODS

This study employs a library research method with a qualitative-descriptive approach. This method was selected because the research focuses on a conceptual analysis of Haedar Nashir's ideas regarding religious moderation and their relevance to the development of Muhammadiyah education. Data were obtained through the examination and analysis of various literature sources—including reputable scholarly journal articles, academic books, organizational documents, and scientific publications—relevant to the themes of religious moderation, "progressive Islam" (*Islam berkemajuan*), and Islamic education. Library research enables researchers to deeply interpret the ideas, concepts, and intellectual constructs found in various written sources, thereby fostering a comprehensive understanding of a socio-religious phenomenon (Snyder, 2021). In this study, literature was selected based on thematic relevance, academic credibility, and the recency of sources—specifically publications from the last five years addressing the dynamics of Islamic moderation, Islamic education, and the transformation of religious movements in the contemporary era.

The data analysis process was conducted in several stages: literature inventory, classification of sources based on research themes, interpretation of literature content, and the formulation of a conceptual synthesis. A content analysis approach was employed to identify key themes related to the concepts of *wasathiyah* (moderation),

Islam Berkemajuan (Progressive Islam), tolerance, character education, and the role of Islamic educational institutions in fostering moderate religious practice. This approach was chosen because library-based research aims not merely to gather information but also to understand the relationships between ideas and discern patterns of thought across various academic sources (Paul & Criado, 2020). Through this method, the study seeks to explain how Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation can be understood as a religious paradigm that integrates Islamic, humanitarian, and national values, while also offering implications for strengthening Muhammadiyah's educational paradigm amidst the challenges of globalization and digital technological advancement.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Religious Moderation According to Haedar Nashir

Religious moderation has become a significant discourse in the religious life of contemporary Indonesian society. The plurality of the Indonesian nation—comprising diverse religions, ethnicities, cultures, and social groups—necessitates a religious paradigm capable of maintaining a balance between commitment to religious teachings and respect for the reality of diversity. In this context, Haedar Nashir's thought on religious moderation offers a perspective that positions religion as a source of humanitarian values, peace, and civilizational progress. For Haedar Nashir, religious moderation does not entail a weakening of religious conviction or the homogenization of all religions; rather, it represents a way of understanding and practicing religion in a balanced, civilized manner that upholds humanitarian values (Nashir, 2021b).

As the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Board, Haedar Nashir holds a strategic position in advancing the discourse of moderate Islam in Indonesia. His thinking is deeply influenced by Muhammadiyah's intellectual tradition, which—since its inception—has championed the concept of "Progressive Islam" (*Islam Berkemajuan*): an understanding of the faith that integrates religious values with scientific knowledge, modernity, and social concern. In Haedar Nashir's view, moderation is intrinsic to the fundamental character of Islam, emphasizing the principle of *wasathiyah*—a stance characterized by moderation, fairness, and balance in approaching life's various issues (Nashir, 2015). Moderation does not imply taking a middle ground between right and wrong; rather, it entails positioning matters in accordance with principles of justice and truth rooted in Islamic values.

For Haedar Nashir, the concept of religious moderation is closely linked to the idea of Progressive Islam developed by Muhammadiyah. Progressive Islam is not merely a reform movement in education and social affairs; it also offers a religious

perspective that remains open to the changing times. Haedar Nashir believes that Muslims must be capable of facing the challenges of modernity without losing their Islamic identity. Consequently, religious moderation must be cultivated through a balance between text and context—between normative religious values and the social realities of the community (Nashir, 2019).

In Haedar Nashir's thought, a crucial aspect of religious moderation is the ability to foster harmonious relations between religion and national life. Indonesia is neither a religious state nor a secular state that separates religion from the public sphere. Pancasila serves as a meeting point, enabling diverse religious and cultural groups to coexist within a shared national space. In the Indonesian context, religious moderation means treating religion as a source of moral and social ethics, rather than as a tool for one group to dominate another (Nashir, 2022b). This perspective demonstrates that moderate religious practice concerns not only interfaith relations but also the contribution of religion to democracy, social justice, and national development.

Haedar Nashir also criticizes overly narrow interpretations of moderation. In his view, religious moderation should not be directed solely at specific groups or understood merely as an effort to counter religious extremism. Moderation must be viewed as a universal value encompassing various aspects of life, such as politics, the economy, education, culture, and social relations. Social inequality, economic injustice, and inadequate education can also contribute to the emergence of conflict and extremist attitudes within society. Therefore, moderation must be understood more broadly as an effort to create a balanced and just way of life (Nashir, 2021b).

From a theological perspective, Haedar Nashir asserts that moderation does not equate to religious relativism. While a Muslim maintains conviction in the truth of their faith, this conviction must not serve as a pretext for disparaging or harboring hostility toward other groups. A mature religious attitude is demonstrated through respect for differences, dialogue, and cooperation on humanitarian issues. This aligns with the Islamic principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*—a faith that brings mercy to the entire universe (Nashir, 2015).

Haedar Nashir's thoughts on moderation also emphasize the importance of fostering a culture of dialogue. Religious conflicts often arise not merely from differences in belief, but from a failure to understand other groups objectively. Consequently, moderation requires the capacity to listen to, understand, and respect the existence of others. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, dialogue serves as a vital instrument for maintaining social cohesion and preventing the rise of excessive exclusivism (Alwi HS, 2021).

Recent studies on Haedar Nashir's thought indicate that religious moderation, from his perspective, is characterized by three key elements: balance, tolerance, and humanity. Moderation is understood as an effort to bridge diversity while upholding

Islamic principles. Thus, moderation is not a process of erasing religious identity, but rather a way of constructively presenting religion within the social sphere. Research by Ramadan dan Khoirudin (2024) shows that Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation aim to foster a society that is tolerant and inclusive, and capable of developing a form of Islamic education that champions progress.

In the realm of education, Haedar Nashir's concept of moderation has significant implications for the development of Islamic education. Education is tasked not only with transmitting religious knowledge but also with shaping character—cultivating individuals who are open-minded, critical, and responsible. The progressive Islamic education envisioned by Haedar Nashir integrates knowledge, morality, and human values into a unified whole. Students are guided to become religious individuals who are simultaneously capable of living within a pluralistic, modern society (Hanipudin & Raviki, 2020).

Moderation-based education also serves as a crucial strategy for preventing the rise of extremism among the youth. Schools and Islamic educational institutions bear the responsibility of teaching religion through approaches that are peaceful, rational, and contextual. Values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and social concern must be integral parts of the educational process. Consequently, religious education produces individuals who are not only ritually devout but also possess a strong sense of social and national consciousness (Albana, 2023).

Furthermore, according to Haedar Nashir, religious moderation is also linked to the concept of civilization. Religion must serve as a force driving human progress rather than a source of conflict and backwardness. From the Muhammadiyah perspective, Islam holds a mission to build an enlightened life through education, healthcare, the economy, and social services. Consequently, moderation is not merely an attitude toward religious practice but also a paradigm for building a society characterized by justice and progress (Nashir, 2019).

The greatest challenge in implementing religious moderation today is the emergence of social polarization driven by developments in information technology. Digital media often serves as a platform for spreading extreme, provocative, and intolerant religious narratives. Haedar Nashir argues that Muslims must confront these changes by enhancing digital literacy, strengthening character education, and presenting an Islamic narrative that is peaceful and intellectually enriching. Practicing religion in the digital era requires the ability to adapt without compromising fundamental religious values (Nashir, 2022b).

Thus, according to Haedar Nashir, religious moderation can be understood as a religious paradigm that combines steadfast faith, social openness, and national responsibility. Moderation does not imply compromising religious principles; rather, it is a way of wisely manifesting religious values within a diverse society. Through

the concept of "Progressive Islam" (*Islam Berkemajuan*), Haedar Nashir offers a model of religious practice capable of addressing the challenges of the times: being religious yet open-minded, adhering to religious values while respecting humanity, and actively building a civilization grounded in peace and justice.

B. An Analysis of Haedar Nashir's Thoughts on Religious Moderation

Religious moderation has become a significant discourse in the religious life of contemporary Indonesian society. The reality of religious, cultural, social, and political diversity in Indonesia presents a unique challenge for believers: maintaining a balance between commitment to religious convictions and respect for diversity. In this context, the ideas of Haedar Nashir—as the General Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Board—represent a significant contribution, offering a perspective on moderation grounded in Islamic, humanitarian, and Indonesian values. Haedar Nashir's concept of religious moderation views moderation not merely as interfaith tolerance, but as a paradigm for living rooted in the principles of balance (*wasathiyah*), justice, progress, and respect for human dignity (Nashir, 2019).

Haedar Nashir understands religious moderation as an effort to present religion in an enlightening light, avoiding the traps of extremism or a liberalism that has lost its grounding in religious values. Moderation does not entail diluting fundamental religious principles or conflating religious teachings; rather, it involves practicing religion in a balanced manner that aligns with the universal values of Islam. According to Haedar, the primary issue in religious life lies not in religion itself, but in how people understand and implement religious teachings within social life. Therefore, religious moderation must begin with the cultivation of a religious worldview that is mature, rational, and oriented toward the common good (Nashir, 2019).

Haedar Nashir's thoughts on religious moderation are deeply influenced by the ideology of "Progressive Islam" (*Islam Berkemajuan*), which defines the character of Muhammadiyah. Progressive Islam positions religion as a force for social transformation capable of addressing contemporary challenges through approaches grounded in knowledge, rationality, and humanitarian praxis. In Haedar's view, Islam should not be narrowly understood merely as a system of rituals; instead, it must serve as a source of values for the advancement of civilization. Consequently, religious moderation is closely linked to the concept of Progressive Islam, which emphasizes a balance between faith, knowledge, action, and humanity (Nashir, 2019).

Studies of Haedar Nashir's thought reveal that, from his perspective, religious moderation comprises three key dimensions: the theological, the social, and the national. Regarding the theological dimension, Haedar emphasizes the importance of understanding Islam—grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah—through a contextual

approach. Islam must be understood as a religion that brings mercy to all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*) rather than as a source of social conflict. A moderate religious attitude emerges when Muslims are able to recognize diversity as a reality of life that must be managed with wisdom (Salsabila, 2023).

In the social dimension, religious moderation, according to Haedar Nashir, relates to the ability of religious communities to build peaceful and productive social relationships. Religion must serve as a solution to humanitarian issues such as poverty, injustice, social conflict, and moral crises. This aligns with Muhammadiyah's character as a movement of *dakwah* (religious outreach) and *tajdid* (renewal)—one that operates not only in the religious sphere but also in education, healthcare, social welfare, and community empowerment. From Haedar's perspective, religious moderation is not merely an academic concept; it must be realized through concrete actions within society (Hanipudin & Raviki, 2020).

Meanwhile, regarding the national dimension, Haedar Nashir asserts that Islam and Indonesia are not conflicting entities. Islam has made significant contributions to shaping national life through values of justice, unity, and humanity. A moderate stance entails accepting Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia as a shared consensus capable of accommodating the diversity of Indonesian society. According to Haedar, a healthy form of religious practice is one that coexists with nationalism without falling prey to religious extremism or excessive nationalism (Rohman, 2025).

A crucial aspect of Haedar Nashir's thought is his critique of interpretations of religious moderation that risk stripping away religious substance. He cautions that moderation should not be construed as a permissive attitude that treats all religious views as equal without regard for principles of religious truth. Moderation must remain grounded in values and moral orientation. Thus, moderation is not a "middle ground" based on compromising on everything, but rather a path of balance that upholds religious principles while respecting differences (Nashir, 2021b).

These views demonstrate Haedar Nashir's effort to construct a concept of moderation distinct from two extremes. On one hand, he rejects religious conservatism that fosters insularity, intolerance, and a tendency to blame other groups. On the other hand, he criticizes religious thought that is overly liberal, thereby eroding religious identity and fundamental principles. The moderation Haedar proposes is rooted in Islamic tradition yet remains open to science, democracy, and the developments of modern society (Hanipudin dan Raviki, 2020).

In the context of Islamic education, Haedar Nashir's ideas on moderation carry profound implications. Islamic education is tasked not only with transmitting religious knowledge but also with shaping the character of learners to be tolerant, critical, and responsible. The "Progressive Islamic Education" (Pendidikan Islam

Berkemajuan) developed by Muhammadiyah positions moderation as an integral part of cultivating individuals who possess faith while also having the capacity to navigate the challenges of modernity. Values such as tolerance, dialogue, respect for diversity, and social concern constitute an important part of the educational process (Ramadan dan Khoirudin, 2024).

Recent research indicates that Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation are highly relevant to the development of contemporary Islamic education. Moderate Islamic education not only shields students from extremist ideologies but also fosters critical thinking skills regarding religious and social issues. Thus, education serves as a strategic arena for instilling values of moderation from an early age (Ramadan & Khoirudin, 2024).

Beyond education, Haedar Nashir's thoughts on moderation are also relevant to Indonesia's democratic life. He argues that religion should function as a moral force in the public sphere rather than as a political tool for fostering polarization. Muslims bear the responsibility of contributing to nation-building through inclusive and humanistic religious values. A moderate stance enables Muslims to maintain a strong religious identity while simultaneously collaborating with other groups to build a shared society (Rohman, 2025).

An analysis of Haedar Nashir's thought reveals that the religious moderation he advocates is not merely a reaction to radicalism but part of a grand project to build an advanced and civilized Islamic society. Moderation is understood as a way of life that maintains a balance between religion and social life, tradition and modernity, and Islamic identity and national identity. These ideas demonstrate that Islam can serve as a force that fosters peace, progress, and humanity.

Consequently, Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation make a significant contribution to enriching the discourse on Islam in Indonesia. The moderation he proposes goes beyond symbolic tolerance, aiming instead for social transformation through education, *dakwah* (religious outreach), and humanitarian initiatives. In the context of Indonesia's pluralistic society, these ideas offer a relevant paradigm of religious practice—one capable of balancing steadfast faith with social openness.

C. Implications for Muhammadiyah Education

Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation have significantly influenced the direction of Muhammadiyah education in the contemporary era. From Haedar's perspective, religious moderation is understood not merely as avoiding religious extremism, but as a religious paradigm that positions Islam as a faith fostering progress, humanity, and universal well-being. This concept is rooted in the idea of

"Progressive Islam" (*Islam Berkemajuan*)—a defining characteristic of Muhammadiyah—which seeks to present an Islam capable of responding to the changing times by integrating Islamic values, scientific knowledge, and social concern. In the educational context, Haedar Nashir's thought shapes how Muhammadiyah educational institutions design learning systems; these systems aim to produce individuals who are not only spiritually pious but also open-minded, capable of critical thinking, and deeply concerned with national and humanitarian issues (Suriyati et al., 2025).

Since its inception, Muhammadiyah education has been characterized by a spirit of reform that integrates religious and general education. However, as Muhammadiyah enters its second century, educational challenges have become increasingly complex due to social changes, the rise of digital technology, globalization, and growing religious polarization. Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation serve as a crucial foundation for reinforcing the identity of Muhammadiyah education, ensuring it remains grounded in Islamic values without falling into the traps of exclusivism or narrow conservatism. Muhammadiyah education is oriented toward shaping "progressive individuals" who maintain a balance between religiosity, intellectuality, and social responsibility (Pamungkas et al., 2025).

A key implication of Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation for Muhammadiyah education is the strengthening of the "Progressive Islamic education" paradigm. According to Haedar, Progressive Islam is not merely an organizational slogan but a worldview that positions Islam as a force for social transformation. Education serves not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to build civilization through the advancement of science, innovation, and character building. Therefore, Muhammadiyah schools and higher education institutions are required to produce graduates capable of facing the challenges of modernity while maintaining a strong Islamic moral foundation (Huda & Putra, 2025).

From the perspective of religious moderation, Muhammadiyah education plays a strategic role in fostering an inclusive religious culture. Muhammadiyah educational institutions serve not merely as venues for normative religious instruction but also as spaces for cultivating tolerance, respect for diversity, and the capacity for dialogue with other groups. Religious moderation requires students to understand that strong religious commitment need not manifest as the rejection of others; rather, it should be expressed through positive contributions to society. This aligns with Muhammadiyah's character as a *dakwah* (missionary) movement that prioritizes *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) through educational, social, and humanitarian approaches (Mardiah, 2026).

A further implication is evident in the development of the Muhammadiyah educational curriculum. Haedar Nashir's thought advocates for the integration of Islamic values with modern science. The Muhammadiyah curriculum must go beyond emphasizing the mastery of religious subject matter; it needs to develop students' competencies in science, technology, social studies, and culture. This integration reflects an Islamic concept that does not separate religious knowledge from worldly knowledge. "Progressive Islamic education" aims to produce a generation that possesses high academic aptitude alongside an ethical orientation in the application of knowledge (Salam et al., 2025).

Beyond the curriculum, Haedar Nashir's concept of religious moderation also impacts educational methods. Muhammadiyah education needs to develop learning models that are dialogical, critical, and contextual. Religious instruction should not focus solely on the rote memorization of religious concepts but should also enable students to understand real-world societal issues. For instance, topics such as poverty, the environment, democracy, human rights, technological advancements, and social diversity can be incorporated into religious learning. Consequently, religious education transcends the ritual dimension, evolving into a force for tangible social change (Farabi & Ibad, 2025).

Haedar Nashir's ideas also have implications for the character development of Muhammadiyah students. Religious moderation is closely linked to character education, as both share the goal of shaping individuals with moral integrity. Muhammadiyah education is geared towards shaping students who embody the values of honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social concern, as well as the ability to respect diversity. These values are integral to the educational goals of Muhammadiyah, which seek to cultivate individuals who possess faith, knowledge, and a commitment to righteous deeds within society (Huda & Putra, 2025).

In the national context, Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation reinforce the position of Muhammadiyah education as an institution that plays a role in maintaining social harmony. Muhammadiyah education is tasked not only with producing individuals who understand Islamic teachings but also with shaping citizens committed to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. A moderate stance in education entails instilling the awareness that Islamic faith and national identity are not contradictory; rather, they can coexist in building a just and civilized society. Thus, Muhammadiyah education serves as a vital instrument in cultivating a generation of Muslims who are both religious and nationalist (Saputra, 2026).

Another implication is the need to strengthen the competencies of Muhammadiyah educators. Teachers and lecturers serve not merely as conveyors of knowledge but also as role models for moderate religious practice. Haedar Nashir's ideas call for a paradigm shift among educators, enabling them to facilitate learning

that is open to scientific advancements and social change. Muhammadiyah educators must possess broad Islamic insight, strong pedagogical skills, and sensitivity toward humanitarian issues. In this way, teachers can act as agents of religious moderation within the educational environment (Ismunandar, 2020).

In the face of the digital era, Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation are also highly relevant to the transformation of Muhammadiyah education. Information technology developments bring both opportunities and challenges to the educational landscape. On one hand, technology expands access to learning; on the other, it serves as a medium for the dissemination of extremist and irresponsible religious information. Muhammadiyah education needs to foster religious digital literacy so that students can discern information, understand diverse perspectives, and utilize technology for productive purposes. This approach aligns with the principle of "Progressive Islam" (*Islam Berkemajuan*), which consistently encourages the use of knowledge for the benefit of humanity (Mardiah, 2026).

Ultimately, Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation provide a strategic direction for Muhammadiyah education to continue its process of renewal. Moderation does not entail diminishing one's commitment to Islamic teachings; rather, it strengthens an understanding of Islam as a mercy to all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*). Muhammadiyah education must serve as a space that fosters individuals who embody a balance between spirituality and rationality, Islamic identity and social openness, as well as tradition and innovation. Through this paradigm, Muhammadiyah education can continue to play a pivotal role in building an advanced and inclusive Islamic civilization that contributes to the life of the nation.

Thus, the implications of Haedar Nashir's ideas on religious moderation for Muhammadiyah education are evident in several fundamental transformations: the strengthening of "progressive" Islamic education, the development of an integrative curriculum, the cultivation of a moderate character, the enhancement of educator quality, and the reinforcement of Muhammadiyah education's role in national social life. Haedar Nashir's thought demonstrates that contemporary Islamic education must be capable of addressing the challenges of the times without compromising fundamental religious values. Grounded in the spirit of religious moderation, Muhammadiyah education holds significant potential to serve as a model of Islamic education that integrates faith, knowledge, and humanity in the pursuit of a civilized society.

D. Theoretical Analysis

Upon closer examination, Haedar Nashir's concept of religious moderation represents an intellectual construct that seeks to bridge the normative dimensions of Islam with the social realities of modern society. In this perspective, religious moderation is understood not merely as an attitude of avoiding conflict or

maintaining interfaith tolerance, but as a religious paradigm that prioritizes balance, justice, humanity, and progress as core principles of religious life. This idea is highly relevant within the pluralistic Indonesian context, where religious practice does not occur in a vacuum but interacts with diverse cultural, political, and social backgrounds, as well as technological advancements. Writings on Haedar Nashir's views indicate that moderation is not intended to weaken religious conviction; rather, it serves as a means to present Islamic values in a balanced and proportionate manner within a diverse society.

Theoretically, Haedar Nashir's thought can be situated within the framework of moderate Islam (*wasathiyah*), which emphasizes a middle path between extreme tendencies in religious interpretation. In the Islamic tradition, the concept of *wasathiyah* signifies balance, justice, and the ability to place matters in their proper perspective. In the context of contemporary thought, moderation does not imply adopting a neutral stance between truth and falsehood; instead, it entails cultivating a religious approach that upholds principles of faith while respecting the existence of others. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia defines religious moderation as a perspective, attitude, and practice of faith that avoids extremism and prioritizes the common good (Kemenag RI, 2021). This view aligns with the perspective of Haedar Nashir, who holds that moderate religious practice must remain grounded in religious values while being manifested through social behavior that is peaceful, open, and civilized.

From the perspective of the social theory of religion, Haedar Nashir's thought demonstrates that religion possesses a transformative function within society. Religion does not stop at the dimensions of ritual and the relationship between humans and God; it also bears a responsibility to build a better social life. This approach aligns with the idea that religion can serve as a source of public ethics, fostering social justice, solidarity, and the resolution of humanitarian issues. Through the concept of "Progressive Islam" (*Islam Berkemajuan*), Haedar Nashir positions religion as a driving force for social change, realized through education, healthcare services, community empowerment, and the advancement of knowledge. His thought reveals that religious moderation is not merely a matter of interfaith relations but also concerns how religion contributes to the development of civilization.

The framework of Haedar Nashir's thought can also be understood through the perspective of Islamic modernization theory. Since its inception, Muhammadiyah has embodied a spirit of renewal (*tajdid*), striving to integrate Islamic teachings with scientific advancements and social change. Within this framework, Islam is not positioned as a force that rejects modernity, but rather as a set of values capable of guiding modernity to maintain a moral orientation. Haedar Nashir further develops this idea through the concept of Progressive Islam—the view that Muslims must be

capable of facing the challenges of the times while remaining steadfast in Islamic values. Progressive Islam serves as an epistemological foundation asserting that advancements in science, technology, and social life must proceed in tandem with spiritual and humanitarian values (Nashir, 2022a).

Upon deeper analysis, Haedar Nashir's approach to religious moderation encompasses three primary orientations: the strengthening of Islamic identity, social openness, and national responsibility. The strengthening of Islamic identity demonstrates that moderation does not entail abandoning one's faith or homogenizing all religious viewpoints. A Muslim maintains a commitment to Islamic teachings, yet this commitment is expressed through an attitude that respects human dignity. Meanwhile, social openness signifies that the practice of faith must foster positive relationships with other groups. The concept of national responsibility affirms that Islam and nationalism are not contradictory; rather, they can go hand in hand in building a democratic and just Indonesian society (Nashir, 2021a).

Within the context of Muhammadiyah education, Haedar Nashir's concept of moderation holds significant theoretical weight, as education is viewed as a primary instrument for shaping "progressive individuals" (*manusia berkemajuan*). Education aims not merely to produce students with academic proficiency but also to cultivate character that is religious, critical, open-minded, and socially conscious. The text asserts that Muhammadiyah education serves as a strategic arena for instilling values such as tolerance, openness to knowledge, respect for diversity, and social responsibility.

Pedagogically, Haedar Nashir's ideas on moderation drive a paradigm shift in Islamic education—moving away from an approach focused solely on knowledge transfer toward one that fosters social awareness. Religious education must go beyond teaching doctrinal aspects; it must develop students' ability to comprehend real-world societal issues. Consequently, religious instruction needs to be developed through dialogical, critical, and contextual approaches. Students require guidance to understand issues such as diversity, democracy, the environment, technological advancements, and humanitarian concerns as integral parts of their religious responsibility.

Furthermore, religious moderation is closely linked to character education. From an Islamic educational perspective, character encompasses not only individual piety but also social piety. Students with a moderate religious understanding are expected to demonstrate honesty, tolerance, and responsibility, while respecting differences and contributing to community life. Thus, Muhammadiyah education occupies a strategic position in cultivating a Muslim generation that balances intellectual intelligence, spiritual depth, and social sensitivity (Mu'ti, 2021b).

The greatest challenge currently facing the implementation of religious moderation is the evolution of the digital landscape, which facilitates the rapid dissemination of religious information. While digital media can serve as a vehicle for positive *dakwah* (religious outreach), it can also become a breeding ground for narratives of intolerance and extremism. Therefore, Haedar Nashir's ideas are highly relevant to the need for digital education that imparts not only technological skills but also ethical and religious literacy. Muhammadiyah education needs to build students' ability to filter information, think critically, and use technology for humanitarian purposes (Hefner, 2024).

Thus, a theoretical analysis of Haedar Nashir's thought on religious moderation reveals that this concept represents a form of Indonesian Islamic development oriented toward balancing tradition and modernity, religious identity and national life, as well as spirituality and social progress. From Haedar Nashir's perspective, religious moderation is not merely a strategy to counter extremism but a major paradigm for building an Islamic civilization that is inclusive, humanistic, and progressive. Within the context of Muhammadiyah education, this paradigm serves as a crucial foundation for creating an educational system capable of producing individuals who possess faith, knowledge, and strong character, and who make tangible contributions to society and the nation.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that Haedar Nashir's thought positions religious moderation as a paradigm of religious practice that integrates steadfast faith, social openness, humanitarian values, and national responsibility. In Haedar's view, moderation is not a compromise of religious principles but an effort to present Islam in a balanced manner—guided by the principles of *wasathiyah* (the middle path), equilibrium, justice, and the common good. This concept is rooted in Muhammadiyah's "Progressive Islam" (*Islam Berkemajuan*) framework, which views religion as a force for social transformation through education, science, humanitarian service, and civilizational development. Within Muhammadiyah education, this perspective holds strategic implications for strengthening moderation-based curricula, developing dialogical and contextual teaching methods, enhancing educator competence, and fostering student character that is religious, critical, tolerant, and socially conscious. Therefore, from an academic standpoint, it is recommended that studies on Haedar Nashir's concept of religious moderation be further developed through empirical research across various Muhammadiyah educational institutions to assess the extent to which these values have been implemented in instructional practices, school culture, and student character formation. Furthermore, it is necessary to strengthen religious digital

literacy, develop an integrative curriculum model combining religion, science, and the humanities, and enhance the capacity of teachers and lecturers to serve as agents of religious moderation in the face of globalization, technological advancements, and the dynamics of contemporary religious life.

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