

MUMTAZ : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam
Volume 6 Number 2 (2026) : 564-581
Available online at <https://ejournal.uniib.ac.id/index.php/mumtaz>

ASWAJA LECTURERS' STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS WITH WASATHIYYAH ISLAMIC CHARACTER

Agus Zainudin^{*1}, Mukni'ah², Pujiono³

^{1*} Universitas Islam Jember, Indonesia

^{2,3} UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia

e-mail: ¹ guszain90@gmail.com, ² mukniah@lecturer.uinkhas.ac.id

³ pujionohamid@uinkhas.ac.id

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69552/mumtaz.v6i2.3751>

Received: May 11, 2026	Revised: June 16, 2026	Accepted: June 24, 2026	Published: September, 2026
---------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------

*Corresponding author

Abstract

This study examines the strategies employed by Aswaja lecturers in fostering students' Islamic wasathiyyah (moderate) character at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ) in response to the growing challenge of religious radicalism within higher education institutions. The study is grounded in Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which positions lecturers as More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) who provide scaffolding within students' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). A qualitative case study approach was employed to explore the pedagogical practices implemented in the learning process. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to obtain comprehensive and contextual findings. The results reveal the existence of an integrative pedagogical ecosystem that combines curricular integration, dialogic-interactive learning methods, and cultural internalization through the "Aswaja Aplikatif" program. The synergy between scaffolding strategies and applicative learning materials enables theological knowledge to be transformed into lived religious practices. Furthermore, this process develops an "intellectual filter" that strengthens students' ideological resilience against radical narratives, intolerance, and misinformation. This study contributes an integrative-dialogical model emphasizing the transformation of knowledge into sustainable moderate behavior.

Keywords: *Aswaja; Religious Moderation; Scaffolding; Sociocultural Theory; Higher Education.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi yang diterapkan oleh dosen Aswaja dalam membentuk karakter Islam wasathiyyah (moderat) mahasiswa di Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ) sebagai respons terhadap meningkatnya tantangan radikalisme agama



Copyright © 2026 The Author(s).

This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) (CC BY-SA 4.0).

di lingkungan perguruan tinggi. Penelitian ini berlandaskan teori sosiokultural Lev Vygotsky, yang memposisikan dosen sebagai More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) yang memberikan scaffolding dalam Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) mahasiswa. Pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi praktik-praktik pedagogis yang diterapkan dalam proses pembelajaran secara mendalam dan sistematis. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi kelas, serta analisis dokumen guna memperoleh temuan yang komprehensif, kontekstual, dan relevan dengan dinamika pendidikan tinggi Islam kontemporer. Hasil penelitian mengungkap adanya ekosistem pedagogis integratif yang mengombinasikan integrasi kurikulum, metode pembelajaran dialogis-interaktif, serta internalisasi budaya melalui program "Aswaja Aplikatif." Sinergi antara strategi scaffolding dan materi pembelajaran aplikatif memungkinkan pengetahuan teologis ditransformasikan menjadi praktik keagamaan yang hidup dalam keseharian mahasiswa. Lebih lanjut, proses ini membentuk "filter intelektual" yang memperkuat ketahanan ideologis mahasiswa terhadap narasi radikal, intoleransi, misinformasi, dan penyebaran paham keagamaan ekstrem. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dengan menawarkan model integratif-dialogis yang menekankan transformasi pengetahuan menjadi perilaku moderat yang berkelanjutan, adaptif, dan kontekstual.

Kata Kunci: *Aswaja; Moderasi Beragama; Scaffolding; Teori Sosiokultural; Pendidikan Tinggi.*

INTRODUCTION

This document is Amid the increasingly accelerated evolution of global socio-religious dynamics, Indonesia is confronted with a serious challenge in the form of a crisis of religious moderation, particularly among young people who are in the critical phase of searching for ideological identity (Aprilianto et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2025; Nafi'a et al., 2022; Nilan & Wibowanto, 2021; Pajariantanto et al., 2025; Waliyuddin, 2024). University students, as a strategically significant intellectual group, frequently become the primary targets of radical and intolerant ideologies disseminated through digital spaces as well as through closed interactions within academic environments (Mala et al., 2024; Munauwarah et al., 2026; Nugroho et al., 2026; Shepard & Culver, 2018; Sugiarto & Roqib, 2021). This phenomenon gives rise to an educational paradox: although Islamic educational institutions have been structurally well established, the influence of transnational ideologies continues to erode national commitment by promoting rigid and exclusive expressions of religiosity. In this context, Islamic higher education institutions carry a vital responsibility to transform the values of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Aswaja) from a merely theological doctrine into the substantive character of *Islam wasathiyyah* an Islam that embodies moderation, justice, and balance (Ichsan et al., 2024; Muhammad Arif et al., 2026; Prasetyo et al., 2025; Romli et al., 2025). Universitas

Islam Jember (UIJ) constitutes an important locus for this study due to its consistent efforts to integrate *Aswaja* values as the foundation for nurturing students who are tolerant, fair-minded, and balanced amid the sociocultural diversity of Jember society.

From a theoretical standpoint, character development can be understood using Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. This framework highlights that cognitive and emotional growth emerges through the internalization of social interactions shaped by culture. In this context, students function within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where they still need guidance to grasp complex ideas like religious moderation. Therefore, lecturers act as More Knowledgeable Others (MKO), offering structured support and scaffolding to gradually enhance students' understanding and independent learning capacity (Vygotsky, 1997). Lecturers act as facilitators who guide students in understanding *Aswaja* values, simplifying classical texts, and connecting them to modern contexts, enabling students to internalize these values and apply them in shaping their character independently.

Several previous studies have explored the internalization of *Aswaja* values, such as Hasibullah (2025) and Anam (2022) which focus on patterns of traditional habituation in *pesantren*, as well as (Yunita, Ahmad Arifi, 2024), and (Zainudin et al., 2025), each of which examines technological adaptation, the challenges of cyber-religion, and the development of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* character model. Nevertheless, a significant pedagogical-practical gap remains. Most existing studies continue to focus on macro-managerial aspects or on the static end results of character formation, while paying insufficient attention to the micro-level mechanisms of interaction between lecturers and students in the process of value construction. The central issue lies not in what is taught through the curriculum, but in how the instructional design is articulated. It is precisely this weakness in strategy that enables students to understand religious moderation at a cognitive level, yet fail to develop a resilient disposition.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the researcher considers this study important as an effort to address the limitations of previous research by proposing an integrative-dialogical strategy that positions lecturers' exemplary conduct as a key instrument in character transformation. This study becomes even more urgent in light of the escalating influence of transnational ideologies within campus environments, thereby necessitating a strong scaffolding mechanism to bridge classical texts with the complex social realities faced by students. Thus, the primary focus of this study is to uncover the strategies employed by *Aswaja* lecturers in cultivating students with the character of *Islam wasathiyyah* at UIJ. This study aims to analyze in depth the effectiveness of lecturers' roles as More Knowledgeable

Others (MKO) in constructing a strong and grounded religious understanding. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, this research integrates in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation study to capture the phenomenon comprehensively. The original contribution of this study is expected to enrich sociocultural educational theory while also serving as a strategic guide for educators in designing sustainable methods for internalizing the values of moderation that are relevant to complex social realities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth the construction of Islam wasathiyyah values through Aswaja learning at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ). The research involved five Aswaja lecturers and twenty-five students from Universitas Islam Jember and was conducted from December 2025 to February 2026. (John W, 2008). This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design in order to explore in depth the process of constructing the values of *Islam wasathiyyah* through *Aswaja* learning at UIJ. The selection of the case study method is grounded in the need to understand the phenomenon holistically within a bounded system, in which the researcher serves as the key instrument and is directly involved in naturalistic field observation. The paradigm of social constructivism provides the principal theoretical foundation for examining how the meaning of religious moderation is built intersubjectively through interactions between lecturers and students (Sumadiyah & Wahyuni, 2024). The focus of the study is directed toward the pedagogical strategies implemented at UIJ, particularly in the use of digital media and the campus environment as means of internalizing an inclusive and tolerant character.

The research was conducted at UIJ, an institution recognized for its strong commitment to developing Aswaja An-Nahdliyah values. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, including the Rector, Vice Rector I for Academic Affairs, lecturers teaching the Aswaja course, and actively engaged students. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data came from in-depth interviews and direct field observations, while secondary data included official documents such as the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) and academic guidelines. Data collection applied triangulation methods, combining interviews to capture participants' perspectives, participant observation to analyze classroom interactions, and documentation review to support institutional validation. The data were analyzed inductively using Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, focusing on value construction within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this process,

lecturers act as More Knowledgeable Others (MKO), providing scaffolding to help students develop intellectual independence in addressing radicalism.

To ensure the quality and credibility of the findings, this study applies standards of data validity through source and technique triangulation, as well as prolonged engagement in the field. (Miles et al., 2014). The research procedure was carried out through four systematic stages, beginning with the pre-field stage to establish contextual orientation, followed by the fieldwork stage for the collection of primary data, the data analysis stage to interpret the findings through Vygotsky's analytical lens, and concluding with the stage of reporting the research results. Data analysis was conducted continuously by following an interactive model comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. This methodological framework ensures that the resulting narrative possesses substantial contextual depth and strong academic validity in accordance with international publication standards, thereby enabling the formulation of theoretical propositions concerning an adaptive and effective *Aswaja* learning model within the context of UIJ.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The strategies employed by *Aswaja* lecturers at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ) in shaping the character of students as *Islam wasathiyyah* (moderate Islam) adherents are implemented through a sociocultural approach that integrates curricular, pedagogical, and cultural-institutional aspects. Based on the results of qualitative research assumption testing through source and technique triangulation, it was found that consistency between institutional policies, instructional instruments, and field practices constitutes the primary key to the successful internalization of values.

Curricular Integration and Theological Reinforcement

The formation of moderate character at UIJ begins with strengthening the cognitive structure through the formal curriculum. At the initial planning stage, lecturers bear full responsibility for designing the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) and Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK), prioritizing the values of moderate Islam. By emphasizing the indicators of balance (*tawāzun*) and justice (*i'tidāl*) as foundational principles, this planning is systematically directed toward shaping students' *wasathiyyah* character.

The curriculum design process ensures that each learning material encourages students to think critically from an inclusive perspective. Thus, learning is not merely a process of knowledge transfer but transforms into a process of internalizing balanced Islamic values. This aligns with the objectives of establishing

CPMK and Sub-CPMK at UIJ, which target the mastery of *aqidah*, *fiqh*, and *tasawuf* within the framework of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja)*, equipping students with the ability to apply these values in their daily lives.

Furthermore, document analysis reveals that this comprehensive curriculum design is positioned as an “intellectual shield” for students in مواجهة the infiltration of rigid transnational ideologies. The consistency of institutional policy in reinforcing this character formation is affirmed by the Rector of UIJ, Ahmad Halid, who stated:

“UIJ policies emphasize the importance of developing students’ character based on the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah (Aswaja), encompassing the principles of tawassuth (moderation), tawāzun (balance), tasāmuh (tolerance), and amar ma’ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil). In addition to academic learning, UIJ also places strong emphasis on religious activities as a means of implementing spiritual values within campus life.”

Dialogical and Interactive Pedagogical Approach

The transition from macro-level policy to micro-level classroom practice is reflected in the shifting role of lecturers, who no longer rely on rigid indoctrinative methods. Instead, lecturers position themselves as *More Knowledgeable Others* (MKO), providing gradual pedagogical support or scaffolding through interactive dialogue and the Student-Centered Learning (SCL) approach. This method enables students to critically explore the concept of moderation within their *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD). As a result, the effectiveness of this strategy is measured not only by cognitive mastery of the subject matter but also by observable behavioral changes, particularly in fostering more inclusive and wise attitudes toward differing opinions within the campus environment.

To further deepen the internalization of these values, lecturers employ dialectical discussion methods that require active student participation in dialogues on the principles of moderation, tolerance, and justice. This dialogical space allows students to express their views and engage in constructive debate to arrive at substantive *wasathiyyah* principles. The strategy is further strengthened through the use of case studies and problem-based learning, enabling students to analyze religious issues in a contextual and objective manner (Riyanto et al., 2024). Through this approach, students are trained to manage *ikhtilāf* (differences of opinion) as an intellectual tradition that must be addressed through comparative analysis of evidences (*dalil*) and methodologies (*manhaj*), while consistently prioritizing the values of unity and the collective welfare (*maslahah*) of the Muslim community.

Cultural Strategy and Value Personalization through “Applied Aswaja”

Beyond formal pathways, the research findings highlight the strength of the “Applied Aswaja” strategy, which operates in a non-curricular domain. This strategy represents a form of value internalization through the habituation of routine religious practices contextualized to the social needs of students. The emphasis on this practical dimension is articulated by the Vice Rector I of UIJ, Arifin Nur Budiono, who stated:

“Aswaja-oriented behavior is expected to be reflected in students’ daily lives, including practices such as funeral management, the performance of congregational prayers, tahlil rituals, and da’wah, all of which are integrated into the “Applied Aswaja” training programs.”

Beyond mere routine, the formation of *wasathiyyah* (moderate) Islamic character at UIJ does not end in the classroom but is extended through real-life practices beyond it. Students are encouraged to practice *tabayyun* (verification) toward viral religious information to ensure its validity before dissemination. In addition, students are actively engaged in social projects, mentoring activities, and student organizations such as IPNU/IPPNU, ISNU, Lesbumi or Ansor to strengthen their moderate attitudes within the context of national life.

In this process, the role of lecturers as role models becomes a key instrument. Lecturers demonstrate exemplary conduct through courteous behavior, proper dialogical ethics, and the use of accountable references in both academic and non-academic interactions. By consistently embodying inclusive attitudes and respect for plurality, lecturers help foster a learning environment that shapes students into individuals who are wise, tolerant, and just.

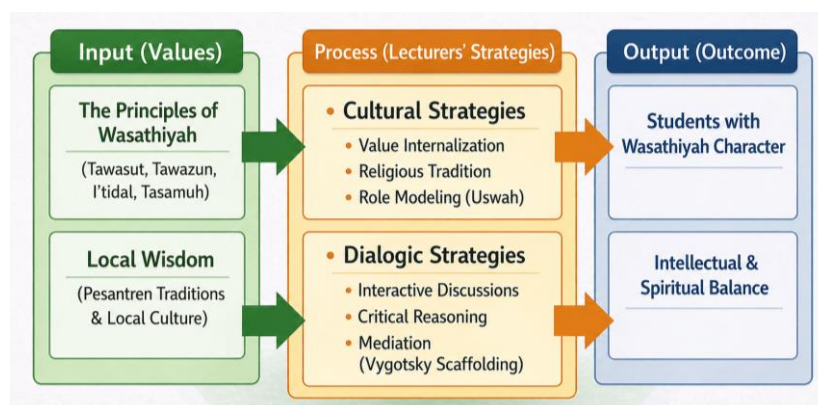


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of Lecturers’ Strategies in Shaping the Character of *Islam Wasathiyyah*

Theoretically, these practices at UIJ validate the sociocultural theory of (Vygotsky, 1997), which posits that higher mental function including moderate character are constructed through social interaction and cultural tools in the form of religious traditions. As stated by (Hasibullah, 2025), Islamic higher education institutions hold a strategic role as a foundation for strengthening moderate ideology to counter the spread of radicalism. Field data from UIJ indicate that this role is systematically implemented through the integration of local values and *Aswaja*, which aligns with the effectiveness of cultural approaches as previously discussed by (Anam, 2022) in mitigating the potential for ideological conflict within educational environments. The findings regarding the use of dialogical and interactive methods as an intellectual “filter” in the classroom provide a practical response to concerns (Yunita, Ahmad Arifi, 2024) regarding the phenomenon of *cyber religion* and the rapid flow of religious information in the digital space.

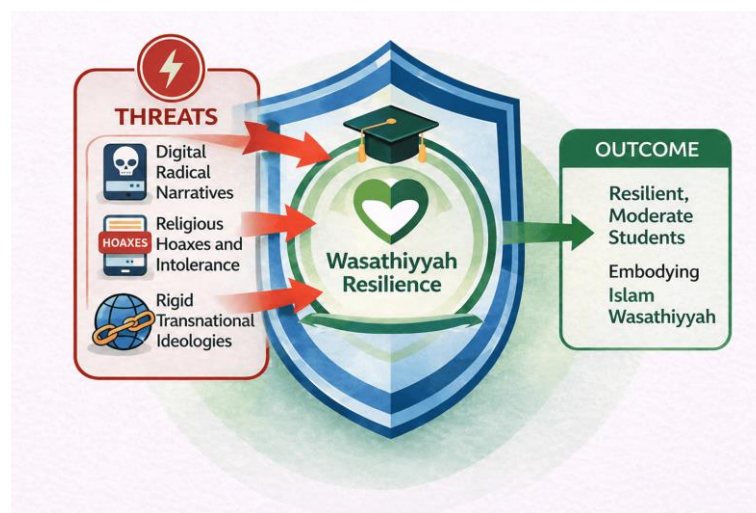


Figure 2. The Lecturers' Intellectual Filtering Mechanism in Building Students' Wasathiyyah Resilience

As illustrated in Figure 2, cultural and dialogical strategies function as a filtering mechanism that selectively mediates external influences, ensuring that students internalize only those values that support religious moderation. This finding directly confirms the validity of the *Aswaja An-Nahdliyah* values-based character development model developed by (Zainudin et al., 2025), in which the synergy between modern academic reasoning and *pesantren* traditions becomes the primary key to fostering students' ideological resilience in the contemporary era.

In responding to the influx of rigid transnational ideologies, these cultural and dialogical strategies function as a crucial intellectual filter that actively mediates

external influences entering students' cognitive and social spaces. Rather than passively receiving information, students are equipped with the analytical capacity to evaluate, reinterpret, and selectively internalize values that align with the principles of *wasathiyyah* (moderation). This filtering process is not incidental, but deliberately constructed through the integration of curriculum, pedagogy, and lived cultural practices within the academic environment.

As emphasized in scholarly discussions on the importance of sustaining the resilience of moderate values within educational institutions, character strengthening at UIJ operates as a form of ideological safeguarding for students. It nurtures not only intellectual competence but also moral discernment, enabling students to navigate complex religious discourses without falling into extremes. This becomes increasingly significant in contemporary contexts where ideological contestation is no longer confined to physical spaces but extends into digital ecosystems.

Within the framework of recent literature on the phenomenon of *cyber religion*, this approach proves particularly relevant. The rapid and often unverified circulation of religious content in digital spaces exposes students to fragmented, decontextualized, and sometimes radical interpretations of Islam. By fostering strong religious literacy, critical thinking, and epistemic discipline, UIJ enables students to act as informed agents who can critically assess, verify (*tabayyun*), and respond to such narratives in a responsible manner.

Furthermore, the success of this strategy lies in its ability to bridge tradition and modernity. The hybridization between the deeply rooted traditions of *pesantren* and the academic rigor of modern higher education creates a balanced educational model that is both contextually grounded and intellectually robust. This synthesis not only strengthens students' ideological resilience but also prepares them to contribute constructively to a pluralistic society, where inclusivity, tolerance, and justice are essential foundations for social harmony.

Discussion

Learning strategies at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ) constitute a highly determining element in shaping *Islam Wasathiyyah* (moderate Islamic) character. The research findings affirm that an effective strategy is one that is capable of transforming students' cognitive and behavioral structures in a sustainable manner. Therefore, learning strategies at UIJ should not be understood merely as instructional techniques employed by lecturers, but rather as a conscious and systematically designed process aimed at shaping students' holistic learning experiences. This perspective positions learning as an intentional and value-driven

endeavor, where every component curriculum design, classroom interaction, and extracurricular engagement is aligned toward the formation of students' intellectual and moral capacities. In this sense, teaching is not a fragmented activity, but an integrated system that intentionally constructs meaningful learning environments.

An effective strategy, consequently, extends beyond the transmission of subject-matter knowledge. It facilitates the internalization of values by engaging students cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. Through carefully structured learning experiences, students are not only encouraged to understand concepts at a theoretical level but are also guided to embody these values in their attitudes and decision-making processes. This transformation from knowing to being reflects the deeper purpose of education, where learning becomes a process of personal and ethical development rather than mere academic achievement.

Furthermore, the actualization of values in students' everyday actions represents the ultimate indicator of successful learning strategies. At UIJ, this is achieved through the integration of dialogical pedagogy, reflective practice, and real-world application, enabling students to translate abstract principles into concrete behaviors. As a result, learning strategies function as a bridge between knowledge and practice, ensuring that the values of moderation, tolerance, and justice are not only understood but also lived consistently in diverse social contexts (Asiah, 2017).

Curricular Integration and Theological Reinforcement

The strategies employed by Aswaja lecturers at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ) begin with a fundamental step, namely establishing a strong cognitive foundation through the formal integration of moderation values into the curriculum architecture, as reflected in the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) and Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK). From the perspective of Lev Vygotsky, this represents an effort by lecturers to map students' *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD), an area in which students have the potential to understand moderation but still require structured support. As *More Knowledgeable Others* (MKO), lecturers do not merely present theological material textually; rather, they design learning schemes that enable students to move beyond their initial understandings, which may still be rigid or fragmented. Within this framework, the values of *tawassuth* (moderation), *tawāzun* (balance), *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), and *i'tidāl* (justice) are no longer positioned as abstract concepts but are transformed into measurable and applicable competency indicators. This systematic approach directly reinforces the model proposed by (Zainudin et al., 2025), which emphasizes that the integration of modern academic reasoning with *pesantren* traditions is a fundamental key to fostering students' ideological resilience. (Nasir & Rijal, 2021)

Theoretically, the instructional design at UIJ aligns with the principles of Robert M. Gagné regarding a sequence of learning activities intentionally structured to achieve specific competencies. The strength of the strategy implemented at UIJ lies in its ability to translate complex theological doctrines into practical behavioral indicators, thereby enabling the values of *tawassuth* (moderation) and *i'tidāl* (justice) to function as strong intellectual anchors for students. This integration is also consistent with the thesis of (Hasibullah, 2025) which argues that Islamic higher education must be anchored in institutionalized value frameworks to ensure its consistency in the face of globalization.

The theological reinforcement at UIJ is implemented through a spiral approach, beginning with an in-depth engagement with classical texts and progressing toward the mapping of *firqah* (Islamic sectarian) discourses. This strategy ensures the formation of a strong “epistemic discipline” before students engage with diverse religious interpretations in the public sphere. Thus, the pedagogical process at UIJ does not merely stop at the transfer of knowledge, but succeeds in transforming theological doctrines into ideological awareness and a substantive moderate character.

Dialogical and Interactive Pedagogical Approach

Lecturers at UIJ conceptualize the classroom as a dialectical arena through the implementation of a dialogical approach. This represents a practical response to the challenges identified by (Yunita, Ahmad Arifi, 2024) regarding the phenomenon of *cyber religion*, in which narratives of radicalism often dominate students' digital spaces. By positioning contemporary issues as learning stimuli, UIJ lecturers assist students in developing a critical filtering capacity. This approach is also consistent with the thesis of (Anam, 2022) on the importance of dialogue in religious learning to avoid rigidly textualist interpretations. However, the findings at UIJ offer an important added value: the dialogical process implemented in the classroom is not entirely free or unbounded, but remains firmly guided by the “epistemic discipline” of *Aswaja*. This indicates that dialogue is not positioned as a space of relativism where all perspectives are accepted without critical evaluation, but rather as a structured intellectual engagement rooted in authoritative theological frameworks. Within this guided openness, students are encouraged to articulate their views, question assumptions, and engage in critical discourse, while still adhering to established methodological and doctrinal principles.

This balanced approach highlights that the effectiveness of dialogical pedagogy lies in its ability to harmonize openness with guidance. Educational institutions must therefore go beyond merely creating spaces for discussion; they must also ensure that such spaces are anchored in a clear normative foundation.

Without this anchoring, dialogue risks leading to confusion, fragmentation of understanding, or even the legitimization of extreme interpretations. At UIJ, the presence of *Aswaja*-based epistemic boundaries ensures that dialogue becomes a means of deepening understanding rather than diluting core values.

Consequently, the resilience of moderate values can only be sustained when openness and normativity function in synergy. The UIJ model demonstrates that students develop stronger ideological stability when they are trained to think critically within a well-defined intellectual tradition. This approach not only fosters inclusivity and tolerance but also equips students with the capacity to navigate complex religious discourses responsibly. In this sense, guided dialogue becomes a strategic pedagogical tool for cultivating a form of moderation that is both intellectually grounded and socially responsive.

Cultural Strategy and Value Personalization through “Applied Aswaja”

One of the main novelties of this study lies in the transition from a purely theoretical understanding of *Aswaja* toward “Applied *Aswaja*.” This strategy goes beyond the findings of (Anam, 2022) which have previously tended to emphasize value reinforcement from the institutional managerial dimension. At UIJ, however, value strengthening is carried out through deep value personalization, whereby religious moderation is manifested in real-life practices through mentoring activities, student organizations, and social projects.

The implementation of this cultural strategy positions lecturers as role models and central figures in the internalization process. Students at UIJ do not merely learn about *Aswaja* as an object of study, but learn to become *wasathiyyah* individuals by observing lecturers’ attitudes and behaviors in addressing differences of opinion and social realities. In line with the theory of Dale H. Schunk, effective learning processes must produce enduring behavioral change. Through lecturers’ exemplification and structured social experiences, the values of moderation are not merely memorized but become embedded in students’ everyday ways of thinking and acting.

This strategy functions as an intellectual filter (as illustrated in Figure 2), enabling students to critically screen rigid transnational ideological influences. Through “Applied *Aswaja*,” learning is no longer perceived merely as the acquisition of information, but as a process of becoming a moderate individual. The hybridization of strong *pesantren* traditions with the academic culture at UIJ has successfully produced graduates who are not only intellectually competent but also inclusive and moderate.

Thus, the character formation strategy at UIJ establishes a coherent pedagogical ecosystem through the systematic interconnection between process,

content, and outcomes. Scaffolding functions as the driving mechanism a gradual pedagogical support process in which lecturers, as More Knowledgeable Others (MKO), bridge the gap between the complexity of classical texts and students' social realities within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The core of this support lies in the "Applied Aswaja" content, which transforms theological doctrines into practical behavioral guidelines through the habituation of routine religious practices and deep value personalization.

The synergy between the scaffolding process and applied content ultimately produces an intellectual filter as the outcome namely ideological resilience enabling students to independently navigate and filter the infiltration of radical ideologies, religious misinformation, and rigid transnational narratives. Therefore, these findings affirm that effective Aswaja learning is that which successfully transforms knowledge into moderate behavior that develops sustainably in students' daily lives within a pluralistic society.

Table 1. Thematic Summary of Aswaja Learning Strategies at Universitas Islam Jember

No	Main Theme	Key Focus	Implementation at UIJ	Expected Character Outcome
1.	Curricular Integration and Theological Reinforcement	Establishing a strong cognitive and theological foundation for Islam wasathiyyah	The values of tawassuth, tawāzun, tasāmuh, and i'tidāl are integrated into the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) and Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK). Lecturers design structured learning activities that transform theological doctrines into measurable competencies.	Students develop a strong conceptual understanding of moderation, balance, tolerance, and justice as the basis of moderate Islamic character.
2.	Dialogical and Interactive Pedagogical Approach	Building students' critical awareness through guided classroom dialogue	Lecturers use contemporary socio-religious issues as learning stimuli and facilitate structured discussions rooted in Aswaja epistemic discipline. Dialogue	Students acquire critical filtering capacity, ideological stability, and the ability to respond responsibly to complex

			is kept open but remains guided by authoritative theological principles.	religious discourses.
3.	Cultural Strategy and Value Personalization through “Applied Aswaja”	Transforming Aswaja from theoretical knowledge into lived character	Lecturers serve as role models through mentoring, student organizations, religious activities, and social projects. Students observe and internalize moderate values through real-life practices.	Students embody Islam wasathiyyah in daily attitudes and behaviors, becoming inclusive, tolerant, and socially responsive individuals.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the formation of *Islam wasathiyyah* (moderate Islamic) character at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ) cannot be achieved through a partial instructional approach, but rather through an integrative strategy that systematically combines curricular, pedagogical, and cultural dimensions. Aswaja lecturers play a strategic role as *More Knowledgeable Others* (MKO), who not only transmit knowledge but also facilitate the process of value internalization through structured scaffolding within learning interactions.

The findings indicate that the integration of moderation values into the curriculum provides a strong cognitive foundation, while dialogical-interactive approaches foster the development of students' critical reasoning and inclusive attitudes. Meanwhile, the "Applied Aswaja" strategy serves as a key element in transforming theological values into social practices through habituation, community engagement, and lecturers' role modeling.

Thus, the character formation strategy at Universitas Islam Jember (UIJ) constructs a coherent pedagogical ecosystem through the systematic interconnection between process, content, and outcomes. Scaffolding functions as the driving mechanism in a gradual pedagogical support process, in which lecturers, as MKOs, bridge the gap between the complexity of classical texts and students' social realities within the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD). The core of this process lies in the "Applied Aswaja" content, which transforms theological doctrines into practical behavioral guidelines through the habituation of routine religious practices and deep value personalization.

The synergy between structured scaffolding and applied Aswaja content demonstrates that effective Aswaja learning functions not only as a means of cognitive reinforcement but also as an intellectual filter that strengthens students' ideological resilience. Through the integration of theological understanding, guided dialogue, and value habituation, students are gradually equipped to critically navigate digital religious discourse, pluralistic social realities, and the infiltration of radical ideologies, religious misinformation, and rigid transnational narratives. In this sense, Aswaja learning is not limited to the mastery of religious concepts, but extends to the transformation of knowledge into sustainable moderate behavior in students' everyday lives. Therefore, the UIJ model may serve as a strategic reference for Islamic higher education institutions seeking to develop integrative and sustainable approaches to character formation grounded in Aswaja values.

REFERENCES

- Anam, F. K. (2022). *Model Pembelajaran Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah untuk Pembentukan Karakter di Pondok Pesantren Nurul Islam Jember*. Disertasi, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim.
- Aprilianto, D., Aslamiah, S. S., Zahidi, S., Crisnasari, N. A., & Febbrianti, T. (2025). Religious Moderation as a Counter-Narrative of Intolerance in Schools and Universities. *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 6(1), 188–212. <https://doi.org/10.31538/TIJIE.V6I1.1361>
- Asiah, N. (2017). Analisis Kemampuan Praktik Strategi Pembelajaran Aktif (Active Learning) Nahasiswa PGMI Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan IAIN Raden Intan Lampung 20. *TERAMPIL: JURNAL Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Dasar*, 4(1), 20–33. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24042/terampil.v4i1.1803>
- Hasibullah, M. U. (2025). *Internalisasi Nilai-nilai Aswaja An Nahdliyah sebagai Upaya Penguatan Moderasi Beragama dan Menangkal Radikalisme di Pondok Pesantren Nurul Islam (Nuris) Antirogo Jember dan Pondok Pesantren Aswaja Cluring Banyuwangi*. Disertasi, Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember.
- Huda, S., Warsidi, W., Lukman, L., Hambal Shafwan, M., & Palahuddin, P. (2025). Religious moderation and character education as a model for countering radicalization in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 15(2), 321–354. <https://doi.org/10.18326/IJIMS.V15I2.321-354>
- Ichsan, Y., Syamsudin, S., Nuryana, Z., & Sukiman. (2024). Realizing Islamic

- Education Based on Religious Moderation with the Wasathiyah Islamic Paradigm from the Perspective of the Qur'an. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 21(1), 247–263. <https://doi.org/10.14421/JPAI.V21I1.9944>
- John W, C. (2008). *Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. SAGE Publications.
- Mala, F., Mala, F., & Rahman, F. (2024). Unpacking Soft Radicalism among Indonesian State Islamic University Students. *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 25(2), 44–59. <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v25i2.5826>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. SAGE Publications.
- Muhammad Arif, K., Mumtazah, Z., Khairan, K., & Mardhiah, A. (2026). The Integration of Islamic Moderation in Religious Education of Indonesia. *International Journal of Special Education*, 41(9s), 500–514. <https://www.internationalsped.com/index.php/ijse/article/view/3575>
- Munauwarah, H. H., Salsabila, R. Z., Shafira, Z., Naim, K., & Dzakir, I. A. (2026). Reception of Tolerance Verses Across Academic Habitus: PTKI Students and Digital Polarization. *Dialog*, 49(1), 208–232. <https://doi.org/10.47655/DIALOG.V49I1.1293>
- Nafi'a, I., Gumiandari, S., Hakim, M. A., Safii, S., & Rokhmadi, R. (2022). Mitigating radicalism amongst Islamic college students in Indonesia through religious nationalism. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 78(4). <https://doi.org/10.4102/HTS.V78I4.7547>;ISSUE:ISSUE:DOI
- Nasir, M., & Rijal, M. K. (2021). *Keeping the middle path : mainstreaming religious moderation through Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia*. 11(2), 213–241. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.213-241>
- Nilan, P., & Wibowanto, G. R. (2021). Challenging Islamist Populism in Indonesia through Catholic Youth Activism. *Religions 2021, Vol. 12, Page 395*, 12(6), 395. <https://doi.org/10.3390/REL12060395>
- Nugroho, C., Balakrishnan, K., Wulandari, A., Nastain, M., Malau, R. M. U., & Bintara, C. S. (2026). Mediating Extremism and Tolerance: Social-Mediated Communication, Digital Activism, and Symbolic Power Among Indonesian University Students. *Social Sciences 2026, Vol. 15, Page 459*, 15(7), 459.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/SOCSCI15070459>

Pajariato, H., Pribadi, I., Yusuf, M., Sulaeman, Sari, P., Liu, M. C., & Sari, H. (2025). Religious Literacy as a Mediator in the Ecosystem Model of Religious Moderation Towards Youth ' s Tolerance Attitudes. *NAJHA: International Journal of Law and Society*, 4(3), 445–466.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59683/ijls.v4i3.236>

Prasetyo, G., Fauziah, Y. R., & Syafii, A. (2025). *From Policy to Pedagogy : Religious Moderation as a Counter- Radicalization Strategy in Islamic Education — A Systematic Literature Review*. 14(2), 233–251.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2025.142.233-251>

Riyanto, M., Asbari, M., & Latif, D. (2024). Efektivitas Problem Based Learning terhadap Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Mahasiswa. *JISMA: Journal of Information Systems and Management*, 03(01), 1–5.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4444/jisma.v3i1.744>

Romli, L., Noor, F., Sweinstani, M. K. D., Hanafi, R. I., Sudrajat, A. S., & Bastian, A. F. (2025). Azyumardi Azra on Islamic fundamentalism and wasathiyah: insights into contemporary Islamic thought in Indonesia. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2025.2571754>

Shepard, J. M., & Culver, K. B. (2018). Culture Wars on Campus: Academic Freedom, the First Amendment, and Partisan Outrage in Polarized Times. *San Diego Law Review*, 55.

<https://access.heinonline.com/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/sanlr55&id=97&div=&collection=>

Sugiarto, I., & Roqib, M. (2021). *Diseminasi Pendidikan Moderasi Islam pada Mahasiswa : Strategi Menangkal Radikalisme di Perguruan Tinggi Umum The Dissemination of Moderate Islamic Education to Students : Strategies to Counter Radicalism in Public University*. 25(2), 119–139.

<https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.30984/pp.v25i2.1471>

Sumadiyah, S., & Wahyuni, S. (2024). Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Multikultural Dalam Membangun Moderasi Beragama di UNISKA Kediri. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Ilmu Pendidikan Agama Dan Filsafat*, 1(1), 15–33.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61132/prosemnasipaf.v1i1.2>

Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). *Educational Psychology*. St. Lucie Press.

- Waliyuddin, M. N. (2024). The Grey Area of Religion: Negotiating the Identity of Young Indonesian Muslims Amidst Extremism, Moderatism, and Popular Culture. *Tashwirul Afkar*, 43(2), 223–246.
<https://doi.org/10.51716/TA.V43I2.630>
- Yunita, Ahmad Arifi, F. F. (2024). Moderasi Beragama di Era Cyber Religion. *Raudhah: Jurnal Studi Islam*.
- Zainudin, A., Faqih, A., & Supandi, A. (2025). *Development of a Character Education Model Based on Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Values and Local Wisdom in Islamic Higher Education*. 6(1), 226–244.