

Institutionalizing Islamic Education Reform: The Role of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in Promoting Moderate Islam in Morocco

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Abstract: Morocco has emerged as one of the leading models of moderate Islamic education in the contemporary Muslim world through the integration of classical Islamic scholarship and modern educational reform. Previous studies on Islamic institutions in Morocco have predominantly focused on state religious policies and traditional Islamic education, while limited attention has been given to the institutional role of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in promoting moderate Islam and educational transformation. This study aims to analyze the role of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in institutionalizing Islamic education reform and strengthening wasathiyah (moderate) Islam in Morocco. The research employs a qualitative library research approach by examining books, journal articles, institutional reports, and official documents related to Islamic education and religious moderation in Morocco. The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify the organization's strategic roles and contributions. The findings reveal that Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama plays a significant role in curriculum reform, scholar and teacher training, interfaith dialogue, and the dissemination of inclusive Islamic values through educational and social programs. The institution also contributes to strengthening religious moderation and countering extremism in contemporary Moroccan society. This study contributes to contemporary Islamic studies by demonstrating how Islamic institutions can negotiate tradition and modernity while preserving religious legitimacy in the global era.

Keywords: Islamic Education Reform, Moderate Islam, Religious Authority, Morocco, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama, Wasathiyah Islam.

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Abstrak: Maroko muncul sebagai salah satu model utama pendidikan Islam moderat di dunia Muslim kontemporer melalui integrasi tradisi keilmuan Islam klasik dan reformasi pendidikan modern. Penelitian terdahulu mengenai institusi Islam di Maroko lebih banyak berfokus pada kebijakan keagamaan negara dan pendidikan Islam tradisional, sementara kajian tentang peran institusional Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama dalam mempromosikan Islam moderat dan transformasi pendidikan masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama dalam menginstitusionalisasikan reformasi pendidikan Islam dan memperkuat Islam wasathiyah di Maroko. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka melalui telaah buku, artikel jurnal, laporan kelembagaan, dan dokumen resmi terkait pendidikan Islam dan moderasi beragama di Maroko. Data dianalisis menggunakan thematic content analysis untuk mengidentifikasi peran strategis dan kontribusi organisasi tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama memiliki peran penting dalam reformasi kurikulum, pelatihan ulama dan guru, dialog antaragama, serta penyebaran nilai-nilai Islam inklusif melalui program pendidikan dan sosial. Institusi ini juga berkontribusi dalam memperkuat moderasi beragama dan menangkal ekstremisme di masyarakat Maroko kontemporer. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada studi Islam kontemporer dengan menunjukkan bagaimana institusi Islam mampu menegosiasikan tradisi dan modernitas tanpa kehilangan legitimasi keagamaan di era global.

Kata kunci: Reformasi Pendidikan Islam, Islam Moderat, Otoritas Keagamaan, Maroko, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama, Islam Wasathiyah.

Introduction

The contemporary Muslim world is facing increasingly complex challenges, particularly those related to the reform of Islamic education, the strengthening of religious moderation, and the emergence of various forms of religious extremism and radicalism across Muslim societies.¹ Globalization, the rapid development of digital technology, and socio-political transformations have significantly influenced the religious orientation and practices of modern

¹ Abdullah Hanif, Encep Syarifudin, and Ali Muhtarom, "INTEGRATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 01 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v14i01.7767>.

Muslim communities.² Within this context, Islamic religious institutions are required not only to preserve the traditional authority of Islamic scholarship but also to adapt to the demands of an increasingly dynamic global society. Islamic education is no longer viewed merely as a medium for transmitting classical religious knowledge; rather, it has become a strategic instrument for fostering tolerance, inclusivity, and social stability within multicultural societies.³

These conditions have positioned the issues of Islamic educational reform and the strengthening of moderate Islam as central agendas in contemporary Islamic studies. Many Muslim-majority countries are confronted with serious challenges, including the polarization of religious understanding, the rise of conservatism, and the expansion of extremist narratives that exploit digital spaces and the weak religious literacy of society.⁴ This phenomenon demonstrates that educational institutions and religious authorities occupy a highly strategic role in shaping the direction of modern Islamic development. Consequently, various Islamic institutions throughout the Muslim world have initiated institutional transformations by integrating the classical Islamic intellectual tradition with modern educational approaches as an effort to maintain the relevance of Islam in the global era.

Morocco is widely regarded as one of the Muslim countries that has successfully developed a model of moderate Islam through the strengthening of religious institutions and the reform of Islamic education.⁵ The Islamic intellectual tradition in Morocco possesses deeply rooted historical foundations dating back to the arrival of Islam in the Maghrib region during the seventh

² Muhammad Alfi Syahrin and Widodo Widodo, "The Transformation Of Islamic Religious Education In The Face Of Religious Moderation In The Digital Era," *JURNAL PEDAGOGY* 18, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.63889/pedagogy.v18i1.308>.

³ Muhammad Alfi Syahrin and Widodo, "THE TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE FACE OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA," *JURNAL PEDAGOGY* 18, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.63889/pedagogy.v18i1.246>.

⁴ Muhammad Adip Fanani and M Iqbal Abdurrohman, "Revitalization of Islamic Religious Education in Answering the Challenges of the Digital Era," *LECTURES: Journal of Islamic and Education Studies* 4, no. 1 (March 11, 2025): 79–87, <https://doi.org/10.58355/lectures.v4i1.133>.

⁵ Helen N. Boyle and Abdenour Boukamhi, "Islamic Education in Morocco," 2018, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64683-1_37.

century CE. The existence of classical Islamic educational institutions such as Al-Qarawiyyin University in Fez, Bou Inania Madrasa, and numerous Sufi *zawiyah* demonstrates Morocco's long-standing tradition in the development of Islamic sciences.⁶ This tradition has subsequently been preserved and reconstructed through educational policies and the reinforcement of the authority of the *ulama* in the contemporary era.

One of the important institutions involved in this process is Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama. This institution functions as an intellectual and religious organization committed to strengthening the tradition of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah based on the Maliki school of thought while simultaneously promoting the development of moderate and adaptive Islamic education in response to contemporary changes. Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama is not only engaged in the fields of education and da'wah, but is also actively involved in strengthening interreligious dialogue, promoting moderate Islamic literacy, and preventing extremism through intellectual as well as socio-religious approaches. Within the context of contemporary Muslim societies, the existence of such an institution is highly significant because it is capable of functioning as a mediator between the classical Islamic tradition and the demands of global modernity.⁷

The concept of *Islam wasathiyah*, or moderate Islam, constitutes one of the principal foundations in the intellectual framework and movement of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama. *Wasathiyah* is understood as a religious approach that emphasizes balance, tolerance, inclusivity, and the rejection of extremism. This concept has become increasingly relevant in the development of the modern Muslim world, which is confronted with ideological challenges, identity conflicts, and social transformations resulting from globalization. In practice, the strengthening of moderate Islam is pursued not only through theological approaches, but also through educational reform, the reinforcement

⁶ Youssef Chraïbi and Aïcha Bouzidi, "Integrating Moroccan Islamic Intellectual Heritage into Contemporary Islamic Education: A Systematic Literature Review," *Syamil: Journal of Islamic Education* 13, no. 2 (2025).

⁷ Muhammad Saekul Mujahidin, "Religious Moderation of Nadhlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in Combating Religious Radicalism in Indonesia," *El-Hekam* 8, no. 1 (2023): 231, <https://doi.org/10.31958/jeh.v8i1.9201>.

of the authority of the *ulama*, and the development of contextual and humanistic religious discourse.⁸

Nevertheless, efforts to promote moderate Islam through religious institutions do not always proceed without challenges. The modernization of Islamic education frequently encounters criticism because it is perceived as potentially diminishing the authenticity of the classical Islamic intellectual tradition. At the same time, religious institutions are also required to maintain their religious legitimacy amid the growing influence of globalization and the social transformation of Muslim societies. This complexity demonstrates that the reform of Islamic education is not merely concerned with curricular changes, but also involves continuous negotiation between tradition, religious authority, and modernity.

Studies on Islam in Morocco have, in fact, been widely conducted by previous scholars. The first group of studies focuses on the historical development of Islam and the intellectual tradition in Morocco.⁹ The second group examines the reform of Islamic education and state religious policies in maintaining social stability and religious moderation.¹⁰ The third group investigates issues related to moderate Islam, the authority of the *ulama*, and the relationship between religious institutions and the state in the Maghrib region.¹¹ In addition, several studies have also explored the development of Sufism, interreligious dialogue, and the transformation of Islamic education in North Africa.

Nevertheless, previous studies still demonstrate certain limitations because they predominantly position the reform of Islamic education within the framework of state policy or the general history of Islamic institutions. Studies that specifically examine how *Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama* constructs religious authority, integrates the classical Islamic intellectual tradition with modern educational reform, and promotes *Islam wasathiyah* in

⁸ Mujahidin.

⁹ Chijioke Njoku Raphael, *Culture and Customs of Morocco*, Culture and Customs of Morocco, 2005.

¹⁰ Imam Subchi et al., "Religious Moderation in Indonesian Muslims," *Religions* 13, no. 5 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050451>.

¹¹ Serafettin Pektaş, "A Comparative Analysis of Three Sunni Muslim Organizations on 'Moderate' and 'Radical' Islam in Egypt, Morocco and Indonesia," *Religion* 51, no. 2 (April 3, 2021): 190–213, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2020.1868383>.

Morocco remain relatively limited. Consequently, there exists a research gap in the form of insufficient analysis concerning the role of *ulama* institutions in transforming the values of moderate Islam into educational systems and the social life of contemporary Muslim societies.

This article argues that Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama functions not merely as a traditional religious institution, but also as a strategic actor in reconstructing religious authority and institutionalizing the reform of Islamic education in Morocco. Through the integration of the classical Islamic intellectual tradition, modern education, and the reinforcement of *wasathiyah* values, this institution has succeeded in developing a model of Islamic education that is adaptive to global challenges without losing its religious legitimacy.

Based on this argument, this study aims to analyze the role of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in the reform of Islamic education and the strengthening of moderate Islam in Morocco. This study also seeks to explain how religious institutions negotiate the relationship between tradition, modernity, and religious authority within the context of contemporary Muslim societies.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic studies, particularly within the discourse on Islamic educational reform, religious authority, and *Islam wasathiyah*. This research also expands the understanding of how *ulama* institutions can function as agents of moderation and social transformation amid the global changes affecting modern Muslim societies.

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method. The research data were obtained from various academic sources, including books, journal articles, institutional documents, official reports, and literature related to Islamic education and religious moderation in Morocco. The data were analyzed using a thematic content analysis approach to identify the principal patterns related to the role of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in the reform of Islamic education and the strengthening of moderate Islam.

Historical Formation and Institutional Legitimacy of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama

Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama is one of the religious institutions headquartered in Rabat, the capital city of Morocco. The institution was established as an organization focused on the development of Islamic scholarship, education, *da'wah*, and the strengthening of scholarly networks among the *ulama* in Morocco.¹² The existence of this organization constitutes an important component of the Islamic institutional structure in Morocco, a country long recognized for its strong and well-organized tradition of Islamic education.

The establishment of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama was based on a *Dahir Sharif* issued by the Moroccan monarchy on 15 Muharram 1427 H, corresponding to 14 February 2006. The ratification through the *Dahir Sharif* indicates that the organization obtained official recognition from the state in carrying out religious and educational activities in Morocco. This status has positioned Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama as an influential institution within the Islamic institutional system of the country.

Organizationally, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama is led by a Secretary-General who is responsible for the implementation of programs and the overall development of the organization. Within its institutional structure, the organization also possesses an Academic Council tasked with managing scholarly affairs, developing Islamic studies, and formulating the organization's academic policies. In addition, there is an executive office that performs administrative and coordinative functions in implementing institutional programs.¹³

Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama primarily focuses its activities on strengthening Islamic education, advancing Islamic studies, and disseminating the values of religious moderation. The organization actively organizes seminars, scientific conferences, *ulama* training programs, and various other academic activities related to the development of contemporary Islamic

¹² Pektas.

¹³ Ridho Al-Hamdi, *Internasionalisasi Muhammadiyah Sejarah Dan Dinamika Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah Luar Negeri 2002-2022*, *Internasionalisasi Muhammadiyah: Sejarah Dan Dinamika Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah Luar Negeri 2002-2022*, 2022.

thought. These activities involve *ulama*, academics, students, and members of the wider community from diverse backgrounds.

In carrying out its activities, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama also manages several research centers and publication media. These research centers are intended to support the study and development of Islamic scholarship, while the publication media serve as platforms for disseminating information, religious thought, and organizational activities to the broader public. The existence of these media platforms has expanded the reach of *da'wah* and the dissemination of religious discourse at both national and international levels.

The organization's activities are not limited to the sphere of formal education, but also encompass various socio-religious initiatives within society. Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama is involved in numerous community empowerment programs, intercultural dialogues, and *da'wah* activities that emphasize the values of tolerance and moderation. These activities constitute part of the organization's broader efforts to maintain social stability and strengthen the religious life of Moroccan society.

Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama also demonstrates a strong commitment to the development of the classical Islamic intellectual tradition in Morocco. The organization supports various activities related to the study of classical Islamic texts, scholarly discussions, and the preservation of the Maliki school of thought, which represents one of the principal identities of Islam in Morocco. In practice, the development of this intellectual tradition is carried out alongside efforts to strengthen Islamic perspectives that remain relevant to the evolution of modern society.

The development of the organization reflects an expansion of its activities in the fields of education and religious communication. Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama has increasingly utilized digital technology and social media as instruments for disseminating *da'wah* and publicizing organizational activities. The use of digital media has enabled the organization to reach broader audiences, including younger generations and Muslim communities beyond Morocco.

The existence of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama demonstrates that religious institutions in Morocco play a significant role in the development of Islamic education and the socio-religious life of society. Through its various

activities in education, *da'wah*, and the advancement of Islamic scholarship, the organization has become one of the active institutions in preserving the Islamic tradition in Morocco while simultaneously adapting to social developments and the needs of contemporary society.

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method to examine the role of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in the reform of Islamic education and the promotion of *wasathiyah* (moderate) Islam in Morocco. The research data were collected from various secondary sources, including academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional documents, official reports, and relevant literature on Islamic education, religious moderation, and the development of Islamic scholarly institutions in Morocco.

The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify, classify, and interpret key themes related to the contributions of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in advancing moderate Islamic education. Through this analytical approach, the study seeks to explore the institution's strategic role in constructing religious authority, strengthening the values of *wasathiyah* Islam, and integrating the classical Islamic intellectual tradition with the demands of modernity in contemporary Moroccan society.

Institutional Transformation and Strategic Expansion in Contemporary Morocco

The institutional transformation of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama demonstrates a shift in the orientation of Islamic religious institutions in Morocco from a traditional pattern toward an approach that is more adaptive to the development of contemporary society.¹⁴ At the early stage of its establishment, the organization was primarily oriented toward strengthening networks among the *ulama* and advancing Islamic studies grounded in the classical tradition. The organization's activities were dominated by scholarly forums, religious seminars, and the consolidation of moderate Islamic thought as efforts to reinforce the position of the *ulama* within the socio-religious life of Moroccan society.

¹⁴ Robiatul Adawiyah, "Tracing the Roles of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in the Stability of Islamic Education in Indonesia," *DAYAH: Journal of Islamic Education* 9, no. 1 (2026): 28-43.

This development indicates that religious institutions in Morocco no longer function solely as custodians of the Islamic intellectual tradition, but have also begun to move toward educational transformation and the strengthening of religious moderation. Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama has initiated various educational programs, *ulama* training initiatives, and academic capacity-building activities that are more relevant to the challenges posed by globalization, technological advancement, and changing patterns of religiosity in modern society. This transformation reflects a shift in orientation from a predominantly normative approach toward one that is more contextual and responsive to social realities.¹⁵

This shift in orientation cannot be separated from the increasing challenges confronting the contemporary Muslim world, particularly the rise of extremism, radicalism, and the polarization of religious understanding in various Muslim-majority countries. Under such circumstances, religious institutions are required not only to preserve their traditional authority, but also to develop models of education and *da'wah* that are more moderate, inclusive, and dialogical. Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama has responded to this situation by expanding its institutional activities into the areas of modern Islamic education, digital literacy development, and the strengthening of *Islam wasathiyah* discourse.

Nevertheless, the institutional transformation undertaken by Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama also reveals a gap between the normative ideals of Islamic education and the social realities of contemporary Muslim societies. Normatively, Islamic education aims to cultivate a society characterized by moral integrity, tolerance, and commitment to universal humanitarian values. In practice, however, globalization and the rapid flow of digital information have frequently contributed to the fragmentation of religious understanding, the rise of conservatism, and the weakening of the authority of traditional *ulama* within the public sphere. These conditions constitute major challenges for religious institutions in maintaining their relevance and social legitimacy.

¹⁵ Abderrahim Amghar, "Neoliberalism and Education in the Developing World: The Case of Principal Leadership in Morocco," *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2117415>.

Within this context, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama has begun to integrate modern approaches into the development of Islamic education. The organization not only preserves the teaching of classical Islamic sciences such as *fiqh*, *hadith*, and *tafsir*, but also incorporates contemporary issues including tolerance, interreligious dialogue, peacebuilding, and the utilization of digital technology in Islamic learning. This approach demonstrates an effort to bridge the relationship between the classical Islamic tradition and the evolving needs of modern society.¹⁶

This institutional transformation also reflects a shift in *da'wah* strategies in Morocco. *Da'wah* is no longer understood merely as the transmission of religious teachings through conventional methods, but has evolved into a means of fostering social awareness and strengthening religious moderation. The utilization of digital media, online publications, and international networks has become part of the organization's strategy to expand the influence of moderate Islamic *da'wah* at the global level. This development illustrates that *ulama* institutions have begun to adapt to the changing communication patterns of modern societies, which are increasingly technology-based.

Compared with several traditional Islamic institutions in other regions of North Africa, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama adopts a relatively more flexible approach in responding to modernity. The organization continues to preserve its local Islamic identity rooted in the Maliki school of thought and the Sufi tradition of Morocco, while simultaneously creating space for educational reform and intercultural dialogue. This approach demonstrates that the reform of Islamic education in Morocco has been carried out through a process of negotiation between tradition, modernity, and the social needs of contemporary society.

Conceptually, the transformation of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama demonstrates that religious institutions can function as mediators between classical Islamic authority and the global challenges of modernity. The strengthening of moderate Islamic education, the development of religious literacy, and the expansion of global *da'wah* networks constitute integral components of the organization's strategy to maintain its religious legitimacy amid increasingly complex social changes. Thus, the institutional

¹⁶ Ahmad Fihri, *Reformulasi Kaderisasi Ulama Muhammadiyah* (Penerbit Irfani, 2022).

transformation undertaken by Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama is not merely related to organizational development, but also reflects a broader paradigm shift in Islamic education within contemporary Morocco.

Constructing Religious Authority and Promoting Wasathiyah Islam in Morocco

The role of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in constructing religious authority in Morocco demonstrates that *ulama* institutions continue to occupy a strategic position in shaping the direction of contemporary Islamic development. From the perspective of the theory of religious authority, the legitimacy of the *ulama* is not established solely through mastery of the classical Islamic sciences, but also through the institutional capacity to respond to the social, political, and cultural transformations of modern society. Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama illustrates how religious authority is reconstructed through education, *da'wah*, and the strengthening of religious moderation in order to remain relevant amid globalization and digital transformation.

The strengthening of *Islam wasathiyah* promoted by this organization reflects a shift in the paradigm of Islamic *da'wah* in Morocco. *Da'wah* no longer emphasizes merely the normative and ritual dimensions of religion, but is also directed toward the formation of a tolerant and inclusive society capable of coexistence within multicultural environments. This approach demonstrates that the concept of *wasathiyah* in Morocco has evolved not only as a theological discourse, but also as a social and educational strategy for maintaining the stability of contemporary Muslim societies.¹⁷

Within the context of Islamic education, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama develops an integrative approach that combines the classical Islamic intellectual tradition with the needs of modern education. This approach reflects a transformation in the Islamic educational system, which had previously been more oriented toward the transmission of traditional religious sciences, into a model of education that is more contextual and adaptive. The integration of *fiqh*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, and contemporary issues such as tolerance, peacebuilding, and interreligious dialogue demonstrates that the reform of

¹⁷ Muhammad Alfi Syahrin and Widodo, "THE TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE FACE OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA."

Islamic education in Morocco is directed toward the formation of a Muslim generation that possesses both religious competence and global social awareness.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be understood as a form of institutionalization of moderate Islam through education and the strengthening of *ulama* authority. This institutionalization has become increasingly important due to the growing challenges of radicalism and religious polarization in various Muslim-majority countries. Under such circumstances, religious institutions function not only as centers of religious education, but also as social mechanisms for maintaining a balance between Islamic identity, social stability, and the demands of modernity. Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama demonstrates that moderate Islamic education can serve as an effective instrument for preventing the spread of religion-based extremism.

Compared with several other Muslim-majority countries, the Moroccan approach possesses relatively distinctive characteristics. In certain regions of the Middle East, the reform of Islamic education is often oriented toward a formal and bureaucratic state-centered approach. In Morocco, however, the strengthening of religious moderation is pursued through a combination of state legitimacy, the authority of the *ulama*, and Sufi traditions that have long been deeply embedded within social life. This condition places Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in a more flexible position in constructing relationships between the state, religion, and civil society.

A comparison with several moderate Islamic institutions in Southeast Asia also reveals similarities in strengthening moderation-based Islamic education. Organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia likewise emphasize the importance of education, tolerance, and the empowerment of civil society in promoting moderate Islam. Nevertheless, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama possesses its own distinctive characteristics because it operates within a religious monarchical system that provides formal legitimacy to the authority of the *ulama* and religious institutions. This factor demonstrates that local political and cultural contexts significantly influence the patterns through which moderate Islam is developed in each Muslim-majority country.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its effort to expand scholarly discussions concerning the relationship between the reform of Islamic

education, religious authority, and *Islam wasathiyah* in the contemporary Muslim world. This study demonstrates that *ulama* institutions function not only as guardians of the classical Islamic tradition, but also as agents of social transformation capable of negotiating the relationship between tradition and modernity. Consequently, the reform of Islamic education cannot be understood merely as curricular change, but must also be viewed as a process of reconstructing religious authority and shaping a moderate Islamic identity in the global era.

In addition to its theoretical contribution, this study also offers practical implications for the development of Islamic education in other Muslim-majority countries. The educational and *da'wah* model developed by Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama demonstrates that the strengthening of religious moderation can be achieved through the integration of Islamic education, the development of digital literacy, and inclusive socio-religious dialogue. Such an approach may serve as an alternative strategy for addressing the increasing challenges of radicalism, intolerance, and religious polarization that continue to emerge within various modern Muslim societies.

The policy implications of this study highlight the importance of strengthening moderate religious institutions within the national Islamic education system. Governments and Islamic educational institutions need to establish stronger collaboration with *ulama* institutions in developing moderation-based curricula, teacher training programs, and the enhancement of religious literacy within society. In an increasingly complex global context, the experience of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama in Morocco demonstrates that *wasathiyah*-based Islamic educational reform can serve as a strategic model for fostering Muslim societies that are tolerant, adaptive, and capable of confronting the challenges of modernity without losing their Islamic identity.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama plays a strategic role in institutionalizing the reform of Islamic education and strengthening *Islam wasathiyah* in Morocco. The existence of this institution functions not merely as a traditional religious organization, but also as an important actor in constructing moderate religious authority amid the

challenges of globalization, social transformation, and the increasing prominence of religious extremism in the contemporary Muslim world. Through the strengthening of Islamic education, *ulama* training, curricular reform, the development of moderate *da'wah*, and the utilization of digital media, Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama has successfully integrated the classical Islamic intellectual tradition with the needs of modern society without losing its religious legitimacy.

The findings of this study reveal that the model of Islamic education developed by Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama emphasizes a balance between tradition and modernity. This approach is manifested through the reinforcement of the values of tolerance, moderation, inclusivity, and interreligious dialogue as part of a broader strategy for fostering social stability and religious harmony in Morocco. Furthermore, the organization also contributes to preserving the Maliki school of thought and Sufi spirituality as the principal identity of Moroccan Islam, which remains moderate and adaptive to global developments.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic studies, particularly within the discourse on Islamic educational reform, religious authority, and *Islam wasathiyah*. This research demonstrates that *ulama* institutions play an important role in reconstructing the relationship between the classical Islamic tradition, educational modernization, and the needs of global Muslim societies. Accordingly, the reform of Islamic education should not be understood merely as curricular change, but also as a process of social transformation and the strengthening of religious legitimacy in the modern era.

Practically, this study contributes to the development of a model of moderate Islamic education that may serve as a reference for other Muslim-majority countries. The experience of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama demonstrates that strengthening religious institutions, promoting moderate education, and fostering social dialogue can become effective strategies for addressing radicalism, religious polarization, and crises of religious authority in contemporary societies.

This study still has several limitations because it employs a library research approach and therefore does not involve direct field data, such as interviews with the administrators of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama, *ulama*, or

participants in the educational programs conducted by the institution. In addition, this study focuses primarily on the aspects of education and religious moderation and therefore does not examine in depth the political, economic, and international dimensions of the organization.

Therefore, future research may be conducted through a field research approach in order to empirically analyze the implementation of the programs of Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama within Moroccan society. Subsequent studies may also examine comparative models of moderate Islam in Morocco and other Muslim-majority countries, particularly in relation to strategies for Islamic education and the strengthening of *ulama* authority in the digital era.

Rabithah Muhammadiyah lil Ulama demonstrates that Islamic religious institutions are capable of transforming into agents of moderation, education, and social change without abandoning the roots of the classical Islamic tradition. The integration of Islamic intellectual heritage, educational reform, and *wasathiyah* values positions this institution as one of the important models in the development of moderate Islamic education in the contemporary Muslim world.

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Author Contributions Statement

Hafiz Ad-Din Tj was solely responsible for the conceptualization of the study, research design and methodology, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, manuscript drafting, critical revisions, and final approval of the version submitted for publication.

AI Usage Statement

The author declares that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in this study was strictly limited to supportive functions, including language editing, grammar checking, and enhancing the clarity and readability of the manuscript. AI was not used to generate original research ideas, conduct substantive analysis, interpret data, or formulate scholarly conclusions. The author retains

full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and academic integrity of the work. In accordance with established ethical standards in academic publishing, AI tools are not recognized as authors or contributors to this manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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