



Nahdlatul Ulama's Civilizational Solutions: An Integrative Model of Moderate Islam

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine Nahdlatul Ulama's civilizational solutions as a holistic and integrative model for responding to contemporary challenges. Using a qualitative literature review design, this study analyzes scholarly journals, academic books, institutional reports, and relevant documents concerning NU, Islamic moderation, pesantren, cultural *da'wah*, community-based economy, political moderation, ecological responsibility, and Humanitarian Islam. The data were analyzed through content analysis by identifying, classifying, comparing, and synthesizing key concepts from the selected literature. The findings show that NU's civilizational model consists of five interconnected dimensions. First, NU's philosophical foundation is rooted in Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah values, *maqāṣid al-syari'ah*, cultural accommodation, and social responsibility. Second, its theological and spiritual solutions emphasize *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin*, *tasawuf akhlaki*, *jihad al-nafs*, and communal religious traditions. Third, NU develops educational and socio-cultural solutions through pesantren, knowledge integration, religious moderation, and cultural *da'wah*. Fourth, NU offers economic, political, and ecological solutions through community-based Islamic economy, ethical politics, Pancasila commitment, *fiqh al-bi'ah*, and environmental sustainability. Fifth, NU expands its global role through Humanitarian Islam, interfaith dialogue, *bahsul masail*, and counter-radicalism. This study concludes that NU should be understood not merely as a traditional Islamic organization, but as an integrative civilizational actor that connects theology, spirituality, education, culture, economy, politics, ecology, and global humanitarian engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Modern civilization is facing increasingly complex challenges, including religious radicalism, moral crisis, social inequality, technological disruption, environmental degradation, and the weakening of social cohesion in plural societies. Although modernity has produced significant progress in science, technology, economy, and communication, such progress is not always accompanied by the strengthening of spirituality, social ethics, and public civility. In this context, religion should not be understood merely as a normative doctrinal system, but also as an ethical and transformative force capable of responding to civilizational problems. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) occupies an important position in this regard because it promotes a moderate, inclusive, and contextual form of Islam that is deeply rooted in Indonesian social and cultural realities. Studies on Indonesian Islam show that religious moderation, local wisdom, and culturally grounded Islamic



traditions are important resources for resisting radicalism and strengthening social harmony (Azra, 2022; Hapsin, 2022; Hefner, 2023).

Nahdlatul Ulama is grounded in the theological framework of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, which emphasizes the principles of *tawassuth* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (justice). These principles enable NU to maintain equilibrium between religious texts and social realities, between tradition and modernity, and between Islamic identity and national commitment. Historically, NU has not only played a role in religious preaching and pesantren education, but also in cultural preservation, community empowerment, national politics, ecological awareness, and humanitarian diplomacy. Thus, NU can be understood as an Islamic movement that does not stop at religious discourse, but develops practical civilizational responses across multiple dimensions of social life (Bruinessen, 2023; Kamali, 2022; Sa'dullah, 2025; Woodward, 2023).

The **state of the art** shows that previous studies on NU have generally discussed several major themes, such as Islam Nusantara, religious moderation, pesantren, cultural da'wah, the relationship between Islam and the state, and NU's contribution to democracy and social harmony. Studies on Islam Nusantara emphasize the ability of Indonesian Islam to dialogue with local culture. Research on pesantren highlights the role of traditional Islamic education in shaping moderate Islamic character. Meanwhile, studies on Islamic politics demonstrate NU's contribution to democratic consolidation and national integration. However, many of these studies remain sectoral, focusing on one aspect of NU rather than positioning NU as an integrated civilizational model. This indicates the need for a more comprehensive synthesis that connects NU's theological foundations with its social, cultural, educational, economic, political, ecological, and global roles (Isbah, 2022; Mietzner, 2023; Mubarak & Rustam, 2018).

The limitation of previous research lies in the lack of a strong conceptual synthesis linking NU's religious foundations to its practical contributions in various fields of life. NU's main strength lies precisely in its ability to integrate Aswaja values, *maqāṣid al-syari'ah*, cultural da'wah, pesantren education, community-based economy, political moderation, ecological jurisprudence, and humanitarian diplomacy into a coherent civilizational framework. If these aspects are examined separately, NU may appear only as a traditional religious organization or a socio-religious movement. However, when analyzed integratively, NU can be positioned as a model of civilizational Islam capable of responding to both local and global challenges contextually and constructively (Auda, 2022; Chapra, 2022; Foltz, 2023).

The urgency of this study lies in the need to reformulate NU's contribution in responding to the crisis of modern civilization. Amid the rise of religious extremism, political polarization, economic inequality, environmental degradation, and global humanitarian crises, the world needs a religious model that is not only moderate in discourse, but also operational in social practice. NU has historical, theological, cultural, and institutional resources to offer such a model through pesantren, cultural da'wah, *babtsul masail*, community economic empowerment, acceptance of Pancasila, ecological movements, and inter-civilizational dialogue. Therefore, examining NU's civilizational solutions is important to show how Islam can function as a moral, social, and civilizational force for peace, justice, and sustainability (Barton, 2022; Fox, 2022; Supena, 2024; UNDP, 2023).

The novelty of this study lies in reading NU not merely as a religious organization, a traditionalist movement, or a representation of moderate Islam, but as a holistic and integrative model of civilizational solutions. This study proposes that NU's civilizational solution is constructed through the interconnection between theology-spirituality, education, socio-cultural engagement, economy, politics, ecology, and global humanitarian roles. Through this perspective, NU is positioned not only as the guardian of Islamic tradition in the archipelago, but also as a civilizational actor with relevance for addressing modernity, globalization, and contemporary humanitarian crises. This novelty is

important because it broadens the academic understanding of NU from sectoral analysis toward a more comprehensive conceptual construction (Hefner, 2023; Ramage, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

Based on the above explanation, this study aims to examine comprehensively the concept of civilizational solutions according to Nahdlatul Ulama. The analysis focuses on NU's philosophical foundation and its contributions in the fields of theology and spirituality, science and education, socio-cultural life, economy, politics, ecology, and global engagement. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic civilization studies by positioning NU as an applicable, adaptive, and sustainable model of moderate Islam. Practically, it is also expected to provide references for strengthening education, da'wah, social policy, community economy, and religious movements oriented toward human welfare and civilizational sustainability (Kamali, 2022; Woodward, 2023; World Bank, 2022).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a literature review design. This design was selected because the study aims to analyze the concepts, thoughts, and practices of Nahdlatul Ulama's civilizational solutions through a critical examination of relevant academic sources. A literature review enables researchers to identify, compare, and synthesize various scholarly arguments in order to construct a comprehensive conceptual understanding of NU as a moderate, inclusive, and adaptive model of Islamic civilization in responding to the challenges of modernity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Snyder, 2019).

The data sources consisted of scholarly journal articles, academic books, institutional reports, organizational documents, and previous research findings related to Nahdlatul Ulama, Islam Nusantara, Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, Islamic moderation, pesantren, cultural da'wah, community-based economy, national politics, Islamic ecology, and the global role of religious organizations. The literature was selected purposively based on its relevance to the research focus, academic credibility, connection with Islamic civilization issues, and contribution to explaining NU's role in responding to social, cultural, economic, political, ecological, and global challenges.

The data collection procedure was carried out in several stages. First, the researchers identified the main keywords, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Islamic civilization, Islam Nusantara, Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, religious moderation, pesantren, cultural da'wah, community-based economy, Islamic environmental jurisprudence, and Humanitarian Islam. Second, the researchers searched for relevant literature from scholarly journals, academic books, research reports, and institutional documents. Third, the literature was selected based on thematic relevance, recency, author or institutional authority, and the strength of its academic argument. Fourth, the selected literature was classified into the main research themes: NU's philosophical foundation, theology and spirituality, education, socio-cultural life, economy, politics, ecology, and NU's global role.

Data were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis was used to identify key concepts, classify themes, compare perspectives among sources, and develop a conceptual synthesis from the reviewed literature (Krippendorff, 2019). The analysis began with close reading of the sources, marking important ideas, thematic coding, grouping the data according to the fields of NU's civilizational solutions, and drawing conceptual interpretations. Through this process, the study did not merely describe NU's thought, but also constructed NU's civilizational solution model as a holistic and integrative approach.

To ensure the quality of the review, this study applied the principles of source credibility, thematic relevance, data traceability, and analytical consistency. Credibility was maintained by

selecting accountable academic literature, especially scholarly journal articles, academic publications, and relevant institutional documents. Thematic relevance was ensured by using only sources directly related to NU and the challenges of modern civilization. Data traceability was maintained by systematically documenting all references, while analytical consistency was strengthened by comparing different sources so that the findings did not rely on a single perspective.

The limitation of this study lies in its literature-based nature, so the findings are not intended as empirical generalizations based on field data. However, this approach remains relevant because the study aims to build a conceptual synthesis of Nahdlatul Ulama's civilizational solutions. Therefore, the findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic civilization studies and practical contributions to strengthening NU's thought, education, da'wah, and socio-religious movements in facing the challenges of modernity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

NU's Philosophical Foundation of Civilizational Solutions

The first finding shows that Nahdlatul Ulama's civilizational solution is built upon a philosophical foundation that integrates religious tradition, social moderation, cultural accommodation, and human welfare. NU does not understand civilization merely as material progress or institutional development, but as a balanced order of life rooted in spirituality, morality, social justice, and cultural harmony. This foundation is important because modern civilization faces multidimensional crises, including extremism, moral decline, social fragmentation, ecological damage, and global inequality. In this context, NU offers a civilizational paradigm that connects Islamic teachings with the real needs of society through a moderate, contextual, and inclusive approach (Azra, 2022; Hefner, 2023; Kamali, 2022).

The core philosophical basis of NU's civilizational model is Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah an-Nahdliyah, which emphasizes *tawassuth* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (justice). These values enable NU to reject both religious extremism and excessive liberalism while maintaining a balanced relationship between religious texts and social realities. Through this framework, NU positions Islam as a source of peace, ethical guidance, and social cohesion. This finding confirms that NU's approach to civilization is not rigidly textualist, but grounded in a dynamic interpretation of Islam that remains faithful to tradition while responsive to changing historical contexts (Bruinessen, 2023; Kamali, 2022; Woodward, 2023).

Another important philosophical foundation is maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, which places human welfare as the main orientation of Islamic teachings. Within this perspective, religion is not only concerned with ritual correctness, but also with the protection of faith, life, intellect, family, property, dignity, and social order. NU's civilizational solution therefore emphasizes that Islamic values must contribute to human flourishing, justice, peace, and sustainability. This orientation allows NU to respond to contemporary issues such as poverty, educational inequality, political conflict, environmental crisis, and global humanitarian problems through a framework of public benefit and social responsibility (Auda, 2022; Chapra, 2022; Foltz, 2023).

The findings also indicate that NU's philosophical foundation is strongly shaped by its socio-cultural approach. NU does not place religion in opposition to culture, but views local wisdom as a medium for grounding Islamic values in society. This can be seen in the concept of Islam Nusantara, which reflects the ability of Islam to interact with local traditions without losing its theological substance. Through cultural da'wah, pesantren traditions, religious rituals, and community-based practices, NU builds a form of Islam that is socially rooted and culturally accepted. This approach strengthens social harmony because religion is presented not as a force of confrontation, but as a

source of meaning, solidarity, and moral transformation (Azra, 2022; Hefner, 2023; Woodward, 2023).

From a civilizational perspective, NU's philosophical foundation can be understood as an integration of *fikrah* (thought), *harakah* (movement), and *manhaj* (methodology). *Fikrah* provides the intellectual and theological basis, *harakah* translates ideas into social action, and *manhaj* provides the methodological framework for responding to changing realities. This integration explains why NU is able to move across different fields, including education, culture, economy, politics, ecology, and global diplomacy. NU's civilizational strength lies precisely in its ability to connect religious reasoning with institutional practice and social transformation (Esposito, 2022; Isbah, 2022; Ramage, 2022).

Table 1
NU's Philosophical Foundation of Civilizational Solutions

Aspect	Finding	Interpretation
Civilizational orientation	NU views civilization as a balanced order rooted in spirituality, morality, justice, and social harmony.	Civilization is not only material progress, but also ethical and spiritual development.
Aswaja values	NU emphasizes <i>tawassuth</i> , <i>tasamuh</i> , <i>tawazun</i> , and <i>i'tidal</i> .	These principles form the basis of moderation, tolerance, balance, and justice.
Maqāṣid al-syarī'ah	NU orients Islamic thought toward public welfare and human benefit.	Islamic teachings are directed toward protecting human dignity and social order.
Cultural approach	NU accommodates local wisdom through Islam Nusantara and cultural da'wah.	Religion becomes socially rooted and culturally constructive.
Fikrah, harakah, and manhaj	NU integrates thought, movement, and methodology.	NU's civilizational model connects ideas, action, and contextual problem-solving.

Based on Table 1, NU's philosophical foundation offers a holistic basis for responding to modern civilizational challenges. Its strength lies in the integration of Aswaja moderation, maqāṣid-oriented welfare, cultural accommodation, and practical social movement. This finding confirms that NU's civilizational solution is not merely theological, but also sociological, cultural, and transformative. Through this foundation, NU can be positioned as a model of Islamic civilization that is moderate, inclusive, adaptive, and relevant to both national and global contexts.

Educational and Socio-Cultural Solutions through Pesantren and Cultural Da'wah

The third finding shows that Nahdlatul Ulama's civilizational solution is strongly reflected in its educational and socio-cultural movements. NU positions education not merely as the transmission of religious knowledge, but as a process of character formation, cultural preservation, social transformation, and moderation. Pesantren, as NU's main educational base, plays a central role in shaping Muslim generations who are religiously grounded, morally disciplined, socially adaptive, and open to modern knowledge. Studies on pesantren show that these institutions have consistently contributed to the formation of moderate Islamic attitudes and community-based social change in Indonesia (Hamidah et al., 2021; Hafidz, 2021; Taufiq, 2024).

In the educational field, NU develops pesantren as a civilizational institution that integrates classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary knowledge. The pesantren tradition preserves *turāth* through the study of classical Islamic texts, while at the same time adapting to modern educational needs through formal schools, higher education institutions, digital literacy, and community empowerment programs. This dual capacity enables pesantren to maintain religious continuity while

responding to social change. Recent studies emphasize that pesantren are not static traditional institutions, but dynamic educational spaces capable of adapting to globalization, technological change, and the need for Islamic moderation (Assa'idi, 2021; Ritchey & Muchtar, 2025; Ubaidillah, 2025).

NU's educational solution is also closely related to the strengthening of religious moderation. Pesantren education develops moderation through the authority of *kya'i*, the internalization of Aswaja values, moral discipline, communal life, and dialogical learning. These elements help students understand Islam as a balanced, tolerant, and socially responsible religion. Research on NU pesantren shows that Islamic moderation is not taught only as a concept, but is cultivated through daily practices, teacher-student relationships, communal rituals, and social engagement. Therefore, NU's educational model produces not only knowledgeable Muslims, but also citizens who are able to live peacefully in plural societies (Hamidah et al., 2021; Hafidz, 2021; Qorib et al., 2025).

In the socio-cultural field, NU's civilizational solution is expressed through **cultural da'wah**, namely the effort to convey Islamic values through local culture, tradition, art, language, and community practices. NU does not treat local culture as an enemy of religion, but as a medium through which Islamic values can be grounded in people's lives. This approach explains why NU's religious expression is often close to local traditions such as tahlilan, maulid, selawatan, pilgrimage, and community-based rituals. Such practices function not only as religious expressions, but also as instruments of social cohesion, cultural continuity, and collective identity formation (Rahman, 2025; Woodward, 2023).

The integration of pesantren education and cultural da'wah makes NU's civilizational model distinct from rigid and puritanical religious movements. NU's approach emphasizes gradual transformation, social wisdom, cultural negotiation, and respect for community traditions. This model is important in plural societies because religious messages can be accepted more peacefully when they are communicated through familiar cultural forms. Studies on NU's cultural strategy show that cultural da'wah has contributed to countering radicalism, reducing religious tension, and strengthening moderation in local communities (Hapsin, 2022; Rahman, 2025). Thus, NU's socio-cultural solution works through persuasion rather than coercion, accommodation rather than confrontation.

The findings also show that NU's educational and socio-cultural solutions are mutually reinforcing. Pesantren provides the intellectual and moral foundation, while cultural da'wah provides the social medium for transmitting Islamic values. Education forms moderate religious understanding, whereas culture makes religious values socially rooted and emotionally accepted. This integration allows NU to build a civilizational model that is both normative and practical, textual and contextual, traditional and adaptive. Therefore, NU's educational and socio-cultural strategy can be understood as a civilizational mechanism for preserving Islamic tradition, strengthening social harmony, and responding constructively to modern challenges.

Table 3
Educational and Socio-Cultural Solutions through Pesantren and Cultural Da'wah

Aspect	Finding	Interpretation
Pesantren as civilizational institution	Pesantren functions as a center of religious learning, character formation, and social transformation.	Education becomes a foundation for building moderate and civilized Muslim communities.
Knowledge integration	NU pesantren preserve classical Islamic knowledge while adapting to modern education and technology.	NU integrates tradition and modernity in Islamic education.

Religious moderation	Aswaja values, kyai authority, communal life, and moral discipline cultivate moderate attitudes.	Moderation is internalized through daily educational practices, not only formal instruction.
Cultural da'wah	NU uses local culture, rituals, arts, and traditions as media for Islamic communication.	Islam is grounded in society through peaceful and culturally accepted forms.
Social cohesion	Cultural practices such as tahlilan, maulid, and selawatan strengthen communal identity and solidarity.	Religious traditions become instruments of social harmony.
Counter-radicalism	Pesantren education and cultural da'wah help reduce radical tendencies and religious rigidity.	NU's approach counters extremism through moderation, education, and cultural accommodation.

Based on Table 3, NU's educational and socio-cultural solution lies in its ability to integrate pesantren-based learning with cultural da'wah. This finding confirms that NU's civilizational model is not only built through theological ideas, but also through educational institutions and cultural practices that shape society from within. Through pesantren and cultural da'wah, NU offers a model of Islamic civilization that preserves tradition, strengthens moderation, respects local wisdom, and builds social harmony in the midst of modern transformation.

Economic, Political, and Ecological Solutions for Sustainable Civilization

The fourth finding shows that Nahdlatul Ulama's civilizational solution is not limited to theology, education, and culture, but also extends to economic empowerment, political moderation, and ecological responsibility. These three fields are important because modern civilizational crises are often rooted in material inequality, political polarization, and environmental degradation. NU's approach places religion as a source of ethical guidance for managing public life, not merely as a private spiritual identity. In this sense, NU's civilizational model connects Islamic values with social justice, national stability, and sustainability.

In the economic field, NU's solution is reflected in the strengthening of community-based Islamic economy through zakat, waqf, cooperatives, microfinance, UMKM, and community empowerment. The economic orientation developed by NU is not merely growth-oriented, but justice-oriented. It seeks to strengthen the economic independence of the ummah, reduce inequality, and expand access to financial resources for grassroots communities. Recent studies on Islamic social finance show that zakat and waqf can become important instruments for poverty reduction, social empowerment, and sustainable community development when managed productively and transparently.

In the political field, NU offers a model of political moderation grounded in national commitment, democratic ethics, and public welfare. NU's acceptance of Pancasila, its commitment to *hubbul wathan minal iman*, and its return to Khittah 1926 show that political engagement should be guided by moral responsibility rather than partisan domination. This position enables NU to act as a civil society force that supports national integration, social harmony, and democratic stability. NU's political orientation is therefore not merely pragmatic, but ethical and civilizational: politics is understood as a means to protect public benefit, prevent social conflict, and maintain the unity of a plural nation.

In the ecological field, NU's civilizational solution is increasingly relevant amid the worsening environmental crisis. Through the idea of *fiqh al-bi'ah* and green pesantren initiatives, NU interprets environmental protection as part of religious responsibility. This perspective places human beings as *khalifah* who must preserve ecological balance and prevent environmental destruction. Studies on NU's environmental engagement show that pesantren and local NU branches have begun translating

Islamic environmental ethics into grassroots practices, including ecological education, environmental campaigns, and community-based conservation.

The integration of economic, political, and ecological solutions shows that NU's civilizational model is oriented toward sustainability. Economic empowerment without ethical politics may produce inequality; political moderation without social justice may become symbolic; and ecological concern without community participation may fail to transform public behavior. NU's strength lies in connecting these dimensions through the principles of *Aswaja*, public benefit, communal solidarity, and moral responsibility. Thus, NU's approach to civilization is not fragmented, but integrative.

However, the findings also indicate that NU faces challenges in operationalizing these solutions consistently. Economic programs require stronger governance, professional management, and digital adaptation. Political moderation requires continuous resistance to polarization and identity-based mobilization. Ecological initiatives require stronger institutional commitment, especially when environmental ethics confront economic interests and development pressures. These challenges show that NU's civilizational solution is not a finished project, but an ongoing process of institutional renewal, ethical consistency, and social transformation.

Table 4
Economic, Political, and Ecological Solutions for Sustainable Civilization

Aspect	Finding	Interpretation
Community-based economy	NU strengthens economic empowerment through zakat, waqf, cooperatives, UMKM, BMT, and Islamic social finance.	Economic civilization is oriented toward justice, independence, and grassroots welfare.
Productive zakat and waqf	Zakat and waqf can support poverty reduction and sustainable empowerment when professionally managed.	Islamic philanthropy becomes a strategic instrument of social transformation.
Political moderation	NU supports Pancasila, national unity, democracy, and ethical politics.	Politics is positioned as a means of public benefit and social stability.
Civil society role	NU functions as a moral force that helps maintain democratic balance and social cohesion.	Religious organizations can contribute to peaceful public life without being trapped in partisan politics.
Ecological responsibility	NU develops <i>fiqh al-bi'ah</i> , green pesantren, and community-based environmental movements.	Environmental protection becomes part of Islamic moral responsibility.
Sustainability challenge	Economic, political, and ecological programs require stronger governance and institutional consistency.	NU's civilizational solution needs continuous renewal to remain effective.

Based on Table 4, NU's economic, political, and ecological solutions demonstrate its broad civilizational orientation. NU does not separate religious values from public life, but translates them into empowerment, moderation, and sustainability. This finding confirms that NU's model of civilization is relevant for addressing modern crises because it links economic justice, ethical politics, and ecological responsibility within one integrated framework of Islamic social ethics.

NU's Global Civilizational Role and Humanitarian Islam

The fifth finding shows that Nahdlatul Ulama's civilizational solution has expanded beyond the Indonesian context into a global humanitarian and inter-civilizational agenda. NU does not only function as a national socio-religious organization, but also as a global Islamic actor that promotes peace, moderation, interfaith dialogue, and humanitarian cooperation. This role is increasingly relevant because contemporary global civilization faces religious extremism, identity-based conflict,

humanitarian crises, and the misuse of religion for political violence. NU responds to these challenges by promoting Islam as a source of mercy, dignity, and global public good. Studies on Humanitarian Islam show that NU's initiative seeks to foster peace and harmony among Muslims and non-Muslims by reframing Islam within citizenship, universal humanity, and peaceful coexistence.

One of NU's important global contributions is the development of **Humanitarian Islam** as a civilizational framework. Humanitarian Islam emphasizes that Islamic teachings should be interpreted in ways that protect human dignity, prevent violence, and support peaceful relations among nations and religious communities. This framework does not abandon Islamic tradition, but rearticulates it so that it can respond to modern global challenges. Research on NU and civilizational fiqh explains that NU has attempted to develop strategic patterns for addressing humanitarian crises through religious authority, contextual reasoning, and collective Islamic scholarship.

NU's global role is also reflected in its promotion of **interfaith dialogue**. Through initiatives such as the Religion of Twenty (R20), NU seeks to place religion as a source of global solutions rather than a cause of division. Interfaith dialogue becomes a space for religious leaders to discuss peacebuilding, human fraternity, extremism prevention, and shared moral responsibility. Recent studies on interfaith dialogue show that such forums can facilitate cooperation across religious traditions, promote peace, and strengthen mutual understanding in a globalized world.

Another important dimension is NU's role in countering global radicalism. NU's Aswaja-based moderation, pesantren tradition, cultural da'wah, and Humanitarian Islam provide a counter-narrative to extremist interpretations that frame religion as a basis for hostility. Instead of responding to radicalism merely through security approaches, NU emphasizes theological reformulation, civic responsibility, education, and cultural engagement. Studies on NU's global peace concept argue that religious actors can contribute to conflict resolution by promoting interfaith dialogue, forgiveness models, and the involvement of religious leaders in peacebuilding.

NU's global civilizational role is also connected to its tradition of *bahtsul masail* and collective religious reasoning. Through this mechanism, NU scholars discuss contemporary issues and formulate contextual religious responses. This tradition is important because global challenges such as extremism, migration, climate crisis, inequality, religious conflict, and humanitarian emergencies cannot be answered only by inherited legal formulas. They require collective interpretation that remains rooted in Islamic tradition while responsive to changing realities. In this sense, NU's intellectual tradition becomes a bridge between classical Islamic authority and modern humanitarian needs.

However, NU's global role also faces challenges. Its civilizational ideas must be translated into stronger institutional programs, international partnerships, educational curricula, and measurable social impact. Humanitarian Islam and interfaith dialogue should not remain elite-level discourse, but need to be connected with grassroots education, pesantren networks, youth movements, digital communication, and community empowerment. This challenge shows that NU's global contribution requires not only strong theological arguments, but also sustainable organizational strategies and wider public engagement.

Table 5
NU's Global Civilizational Role and Humanitarian Islam

Aspect	Finding	Interpretation
Humanitarian Islam	NU promotes Islam as a source of human dignity, peace, and coexistence.	Islam is framed as a civilizational force for global harmony.
Civilizational fiqh	NU develops contextual religious reasoning to address humanitarian crises.	Classical Islamic authority is connected with modern global problems.

Interfaith dialogue	NU promotes forums such as R20 to strengthen peacebuilding and religious cooperation.	Religion is positioned as a source of solutions, not division.
Counter-radicalism	NU offers moderation, cultural da'wah, and theological counter-narratives against extremism.	Radicalism is addressed through education, theology, culture, and civic responsibility.
Bahtsul masail	NU uses collective reasoning to respond to contemporary issues.	Collective ijihad strengthens adaptability while preserving tradition.
Implementation challenge	Global ideas need stronger institutionalization and grassroots dissemination.	NU's global role must connect elite discourse with community-level transformation.

Based on Table 5, NU's global civilizational role lies in its ability to transform Indonesian Islamic moderation into a broader humanitarian framework. Through Humanitarian Islam, interfaith dialogue, civilizational fiqh, bahtsul masail, and counter-radicalism efforts, NU offers a model of Islam that is rooted in tradition but open to global responsibility. This finding confirms that NU's civilizational solution is not only national and cultural, but also global and humanitarian. Its main contribution is the repositioning of Islam as a moral force for peace, dignity, justice, and coexistence in contemporary world civilization.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Nahdlatul Ulama's civilizational solution is constructed through an integrated relationship between theology, spirituality, education, culture, economy, politics, ecology, and global humanitarian engagement. NU does not define civilization merely as institutional advancement or material progress, but as a balanced order of life rooted in religious moderation, moral refinement, social justice, cultural wisdom, and public benefit. This confirms that NU's model of civilization is not fragmented, but holistic, because each dimension supports the others in responding to the crises of modern civilization.

The first finding shows that NU's philosophical foundation is built upon Aswaja values, namely *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, and *i'tidal*. These values provide the normative basis for moderation, tolerance, balance, and justice in social life. This finding strengthens previous studies which argue that Indonesian Islamic moderation is rooted not only in doctrinal interpretation, but also in social practice and cultural negotiation. NU's Aswaja framework becomes a civilizational foundation because it allows Islam to remain faithful to tradition while being responsive to social transformation (Hapsin, 2022; Mubarak & Rustam, 2018).

The second finding demonstrates that NU's theological and spiritual solutions are grounded in *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin*, *tasawuf akhlaki*, *jihad al-nafs*, and communal religious traditions. These elements show that spirituality in NU is not merely personal piety, but also a social ethic that shapes peaceful behavior, self-control, humility, and communal solidarity. Traditions such as *tahlilan*, *maulid*, and *shalawat* function not only as ritual practices, but also as cultural mechanisms for strengthening social cohesion. This finding confirms that NU's spirituality contributes to civilization by transforming religious devotion into ethical and social responsibility.

The third finding highlights the role of pesantren and cultural *da'wah* as NU's educational and socio-cultural instruments. Pesantren becomes a civilizational institution because it preserves classical Islamic knowledge while adapting to modern educational needs. At the same time, cultural *da'wah* enables Islamic values to be communicated through local traditions, arts, language, and community practices. This integration shows that NU's education and culture work together: pesantren forms religious understanding, while cultural *da'wah* makes Islamic values socially rooted and widely accepted. Previous studies also emphasize that pesantren and culturally grounded *da'wah* contribute

to religious moderation and counter-radicalism in Indonesia (Hamidah et al., 2021; Hafidz, 2021; Hapsin, 2022).

The fourth finding shows that NU's civilizational solution also includes economic, political, and ecological dimensions. In the economic field, NU promotes community-based Islamic economy through zakat, waqf, cooperatives, UMKM, and Islamic social finance. In politics, NU supports national unity, Pancasila, democracy, and ethical public engagement. In ecology, NU develops Islamic environmental awareness through *fiqh al-bi'ah* and green pesantren initiatives. These dimensions show that NU's civilizational model is not limited to religious discourse, but also addresses structural problems such as inequality, political polarization, and environmental degradation. Therefore, NU's civilizational solution can be understood as a model of Islamic social ethics for sustainable civilization.

The fifth finding indicates that NU has expanded its civilizational role into the global arena through Humanitarian Islam, interfaith dialogue, *bahitsul masail*, counter-radicalism, and global peace initiatives. This shows that NU's moderation is not only relevant for Indonesia, but also has potential as a global Islamic contribution to peacebuilding and humanitarian cooperation. NU's global role is significant because contemporary conflicts often involve religious identity, ideological polarization, and humanitarian crises. Through Humanitarian Islam, NU attempts to reposition religion as a source of dignity, coexistence, and global public good.

Conceptually, this study develops the argument that NU's civilizational solution is based on an **integrative civilizational model**. This model connects five major elements: philosophical moderation, ethical spirituality, educational-cultural transformation, socio-political-economic-ecological responsibility, and global humanitarian engagement. The novelty of this model lies in its ability to explain NU not merely as a traditional Islamic organization, but as a civilizational actor that transforms Islamic values into practical responses to modern challenges. In this model, Aswaja provides the theological foundation, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* provides the welfare orientation, pesantren provides the educational base, cultural *da'wah* provides the social medium, and Humanitarian Islam provides the global horizon.

Practically, the findings imply that NU's civilizational model needs to be strengthened through institutional consolidation, educational innovation, professional management of economic programs, ecological mainstreaming, and wider dissemination of Humanitarian Islam. Pesantren and NU educational institutions need to integrate religious knowledge, science, digital literacy, ecological awareness, and global citizenship. NU's economic programs need stronger governance and transparency so that zakat, waqf, cooperatives, and UMKM can become effective instruments of social empowerment. NU's ecological movement also needs to be expanded from discourse into concrete environmental practices at the community level.

Overall, the discussion confirms that Nahdlatul Ulama offers a model of Islamic civilization that is moderate, inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable. NU's strength lies in its ability to preserve Islamic tradition while responding to contemporary problems through social practice. The civilizational solution offered by NU is therefore not merely theological or ideological, but also educational, cultural, economic, political, ecological, and humanitarian. This makes NU relevant not only as a guardian of Indonesian Islamic tradition, but also as a contributor to global conversations on peace, justice, and sustainable civilization.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Nahdlatul Ulama offers a holistic and integrative model of civilizational solutions rooted in Islamic moderation, ethical spirituality, cultural wisdom, social justice, and humanitarian responsibility. NU's civilizational model is built upon the principles of

Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, namely *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, and *i'tidal*, which provide a normative foundation for building a peaceful, inclusive, and balanced society. Through this foundation, NU is able to respond to modern civilizational crises without abandoning Islamic tradition or Indonesian cultural identity.

The main findings show that NU's civilizational solutions operate through five interconnected dimensions. First, NU's philosophical foundation integrates Aswaja values, *maqāṣid al-syari'ah*, cultural accommodation, and social responsibility. Second, NU's theological and spiritual approach emphasizes *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin*, *tasawuf akhlaki*, *jihad al-nafs*, and communal religious traditions as foundations for moral refinement and social harmony. Third, NU strengthens civilization through pesantren education and cultural *da'wah*, which preserve Islamic tradition while promoting moderation and local wisdom. Fourth, NU offers economic, political, and ecological solutions through community-based economy, ethical politics, Pancasila commitment, *fiqh al-bi'ah*, and sustainable environmental awareness. Fifth, NU expands its role globally through Humanitarian Islam, interfaith dialogue, *bahtsul masail*, and counter-radicalism efforts.

The conceptual contribution of this study lies in positioning NU not merely as a traditional Islamic organization, but as an integrative civilizational actor. NU's civilizational model connects theology, spirituality, education, culture, economy, politics, ecology, and global humanitarian engagement into one coherent framework. This model shows that Islamic civilization can be developed through moderation, social rootedness, institutional practice, and responsiveness to modern challenges.

Practically, NU's civilizational model needs to be strengthened through educational innovation, professional management of economic empowerment, ecological mainstreaming, digital literacy, and broader dissemination of Humanitarian Islam. Future research is recommended to examine NU's civilizational practices empirically in pesantren, community empowerment programs, environmental movements, political moderation initiatives, and global interfaith forums. Such studies may further clarify how NU's ideas are translated into measurable social transformation in local, national, and global contexts.

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