
Religious Moderation through Friday Sermons: A Collaborative Governance Model in Surabaya Mosques

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ABSTRACT

Friday sermons play a strategic role in shaping public religious understanding among Muslim communities. This study analyzes the collaborative governance of Friday sermons as an instrument for strengthening religious moderation in two urban mosques in Surabaya, namely Masjid Al-Falah and Masjid Ar-Rahmah. Using a qualitative comparative case study, data were collected through in-depth interviews with mosque administrators, media managers, and congregants, supported by documentation of mosque digital media practices. The data were analyzed through condensation, display, coding, thematic categorization, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal four interconnected dimensions of sermon governance: structural, cultural, substantive, and digital collaboration. These dimensions appear in preacher selection, theme confirmation, sensitivity to congregational characteristics, moderation of sermon content, digital production, and mitigation of sensitive issues. The study concludes that religious moderation in Friday sermons is achieved through collaborative mosque governance that involves administrators, preachers, media teams, and congregants.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Friday sermons hold an important position in the religious life of Muslims. They are not only part of the Friday worship routine but also serve as a form of public religious communication that occurs regularly, collectively, and authoritatively. Through Friday sermons, Islamic values are conveyed to the congregation in the form of moral advice, spiritual reinforcement, social guidance, and framing concerning the issues of the community's life. Because they are delivered weekly to large congregations, Friday sermons have a strong reach and influence in shaping the understanding, attitudes, and religious orientation of society (Bowo, 2023).

However, the strategic position of the Friday sermon does not automatically make it an instrument for strengthening religious moderation. In practice, Friday sermons are sometimes still understood in a ceremonial, repetitive manner and are less connected to the social problems of the congregation. In some cases, the religious pulpit can even become a space for reproducing exclusive narratives, sectarian sentiments, political biases, or religious messages that have the potential to divide. Therefore, the management of Friday sermons should not be understood merely as a technical matter of scheduling the preacher, but rather as part of mosque governance for managing the production, delivery, reception, and distribution of religious messages to the congregation (Turohmah & Amalih, 2025).

This issue is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of urban mosques. The city of Surabaya, as one of the major cities in Indonesia, has a social character that is dynamic, heterogeneous, and connected with digital spaces. Urban mosque congregants do not always come from a homogeneous community. They can consist of nearby residents, workers, students, travelers, transit congregants, retirees, professionals, and digital communities who follow mosque activities through social media. This diversity demands Friday sermons that are not only normatively correct but also communicative, contextual, soothing, and sensitive to the condition of the congregants. (Muiz et al., 2025).

In this context, the Friday sermon should be read not merely as an individual performance of the preacher. Indeed, the preacher remains the main actor delivering the message from the pulpit. However, the Friday sermon is also shaped by institutional processes within the mosque. The mosque committee plays a role in selecting the preacher, arranging schedules, confirming themes, maintaining the direction of the preaching, and responding to the congregation's aspirations. The mosque media team contributes by documenting, broadcasting, editing, repackaging, and distributing the sermon messages through digital channels. The congregation is not entirely passive either; they provide feedback and suggestions, criticism, or expectations regarding the theme, language style, duration, and relevance of the sermon. Thus, the Friday sermon is a product of religious communication that arises from the relationships among actors within the mosque environment (Yilmaz et al., 2021).

Several previous studies have shown that Friday sermons can be an important medium in strengthening religious moderation. Wicaksono et al. studied religious moderation through the Friday pulpit in campus mosques and found values of tolerance and anti-violence in the Friday sermons that were analyzed. This study is important because it shows that Friday sermons can serve as a space for the internalization of values of moderation, especially in the context of higher education. However, the focus of the study is still on the content of the sermon discourse, not on the institutional processes that produce and manage these sermons (Rangkuti & Tanjung, 2025).

Bowo's research on religious moderation in Friday sermon materials at Islamic universities in Surakarta also shows that the materials contain forms of moderation within the Muslim community, among different religious communities, and in national life. The study reinforces the argument that Friday sermons have strategic potential as a medium for spreading the values of moderation. However, the main focus remains on the texts and discourses of the sermons, so it does not yet explain how mosque actors regulate the selection of preachers, themes, language, and congregational responses in the practice of managing Friday sermons (Bowo, 2023).

Another study was conducted by Turohmah and Amalih, who examined the discourse of religious moderation in Friday sermon materials at Nur Muhammad Mosque. The study found that the sermon materials contained the values of *i'tidal*, *tawazun*, and *tasamuh*, and were responded to by the congregation in the form of increased piety, life balance, and social concern. This study is closer to the mosque context because it uses field data, but its main focus is still on the content of the sermons and the congregation's responses, rather than on the collaborative mechanisms connecting the mosque administrators, preachers, mosque media, and congregation in managing the Friday sermons (Turohmah & Amalih, 2025).

In the context of digital *da'wah*, Muiz, Taufikkurrohman, and Sattar examine the framing of religious moderation in NU Online Friday sermons as a medium for digital *da'wah* communication. Using Robert N. Entman's framing theory, the study shows that NU Online frames Friday sermon messages to address intolerance, strengthen brotherhood, and foster religious ethics in the digital space. This study is important because it shows that Friday sermons no longer operate only in the physical space of mosques but also in the digital space. However, the study focuses on the framing of sermon texts on digital platforms, not on the management of sermons at the mosque level as a socio-religious institution (Muiz et al., 2025).

In addition to studies on sermons and moderation, the theory of collaborative governance is also relevant for analyzing the management of Friday sermons. In governance studies, collaborative governance describes the process in which various actors are involved in decision-making, coordination, the formation of a shared understanding, and the carrying out of collective actions. When applied to the mosque context, this approach helps explain that Friday sermons are determined not only by the preacher but also by the relationships among the mosque committee, the preacher, media managers, and the congregation. These relationships are evident in the selection of preachers, the coordination of themes, language adjustment, the management of congregational aspirations, and risk mitigation when sermons are distributed via digital media. (Rangkuti & Tanjung, 2025).

Based on the previous studies, it can be seen that research on Friday sermons and religious moderation generally still moves along three tendencies. First, Friday sermons are studied as texts or preaching materials that contain values of moderation. Second, Friday sermons are studied as religious discourse that shapes the congregation's understanding. Third, Friday sermons are studied as digital content that is framed and disseminated through online media. These three tendencies are important, but they are not yet sufficient to explain how Friday sermons are managed institutionally through the interaction between mosque administrators, preachers, mosque media, and congregations (Safei & Armstrong, 2024).

This is where the gap in this research lies. Religious moderation in Friday sermons not only depends on the content of the message delivered by the preacher, but also on the governance that regulates who speaks, what themes are chosen, how the language of the sermon is adapted to the

characteristics of the congregation, how the congregation's feedback is responded to, and how the sermon message is curated and disseminated through digital media. In other words, Friday sermons need to be understood as a product of collaborative governance, not merely as individual lectures (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

This study takes the case of Masjid Al-Falah and Masjid Ar-Rahmah in Surabaya. Both mosques were chosen because they are both situated in an urban context, have regular Friday sermon activities, involve many actors in the management of religious activities, and utilize digital media in the distribution of da'wah messages. Masjid Al-Falah represents a large urban mosque with a very diverse congregation, including workers, transit worshippers, and the urban community. Meanwhile, Masjid Ar-Rahmah is a mosque that intersects with the campus environment, the residential community, the surrounding congregation, and the foundation's institutional ecosystem. The differences in the characteristics of these two mosques provide a rich analytical space to understand the variations in the management model of Friday sermons (Nase et al., 2025).

The novelty of this research lies in the shift of focus from the content of the sermon to the governance of the sermon. While previous studies mostly asked whether Friday sermons contain values of moderation, this study asks how those values of moderation are produced, directed, maintained, and distributed through the collaborative work of mosque actors. Thus, this study offers the concept of collaborative governance of Friday sermons as a model for understanding the strengthening of religious moderation in urban mosques. This model includes four main dimensions: structural, cultural, substantive, and digital collaboration (Emerson et al., 2012).

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze how Friday sermons are managed as an instrument to strengthen religious moderation at Al-Falah Mosque and Ar-Rahmah Mosque in Surabaya. Specifically, this study explains how the mosque management, preachers, media managers, and congregation are involved in shaping a collaborative governance model for Friday sermons. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the study of religious moderation, mosque governance, and public preaching communication, while also providing practical contributions for mosque managers in organizing Friday sermons to be more relevant, inclusive, contextual, and responsible in the digital era.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the governance process of the Friday sermon as a practice of public religious communication in urban mosques. The focus of the study is not only on the content of the sermons but also on how Friday sermons are managed, directed, curated, and distributed through the relationships among mosque actors, namely the administrators, preachers, media managers, and congregation (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

A comparative case study design was used because *the research took place at two locations: Al-Falah Mosque and Ar-Rahmah Mosque* in Surabaya. Both mosques were purposively selected because they have regular Friday sermon activities, a relatively diverse congregation, active management structures, and the practice of utilizing digital media in mosque activity publication. Al-Falah Mosque is a large urban mosque with many congregants, including working and

transient congregants, as well as city residents. Meanwhile, Ar-Rahmah Mosque is located at the intersection of a campus mosque, a complex mosque, and a community mosque, supported by the institutional ecosystem of the Ibadurrahman Foundation and STIDKI Ar Rahmah. The different characteristics of these two mosques enable this study to examine variations in the governance of Friday sermons in the context of urban mosques (Carter et al., 2014).

The unit of analysis in this study is the governance of Friday sermons as a collaborative practice. This means that the study does not only examine the preacher as an individual delivering the sermon, but also analyzes how the mosque management selects and schedules preachers, how sermon themes are communicated or confirmed, how the congregation's character is considered, how congregational aspirations are received, and how the mosque media team records, broadcasts, edits, and redistributes the sermon message through digital channels (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Primary research data were obtained through in-depth interviews with informants who were directly involved in the management and reception of Friday sermons. Informants were purposively selected based on their involvement in the governance of Friday sermons, whether as policymakers, technical implementers, media managers, or recipients of the sermon message. At Al-Falah Mosque, interviews were conducted with the mosque management committee who explained the changes in the direction of sermon theme management, communication with the preacher, the need to improve the quality of preaching, as well as the importance of three-way communication among the preacher, congregation, and mosque management. Interviews were also conducted with the media managers of Al-Falah Mosque who explained the practices of recording, editing, and publishing Friday sermons on YouTube after the Friday prayer. In addition, interviews with the Al-Falah congregation were used to understand the congregation's perceptions of the relevance of the sermons, their impact on work ethic, and their reception of the digitalization of sermons (Flick, 2018).

At Ar-Rahmah Mosque, primary data were obtained from interviews with the mosque management, who explained the mechanism for scheduling preachers, confirming themes, selecting preachers based on recommendations, adjusting the duration of sermons according to the needs of working congregants, as well as responses to congregants' feedback. Other interviews were conducted with the preaching division of the mosque management, who explained that the selection of preachers is done through consultation with the foundation supervisors, including considerations to ensure that preachers do not bring controversial themes that could divide the congregation. Data were also obtained from the media managers of Ar-Rahmah Mosque, who explained the practices of live-streaming Friday sermons, creating posters, providing YouTube links, making short post-sermon videos, and mitigating the risks of sensitive comments or content in digital spaces. The two mosques are not represented by identical informant categories: at Ar-Rahmah Mosque, the Da'wah Coordinator (Informant 5) was interviewed in addition to the administrator and media manager because the preacher-selection process there runs through a separate consultative role. In brief, the research informants can be mapped as follows in Table 1:

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants at Al-Falah Mosque and Ar-Rahmah Mosque

Informant Code	Informant Category	Location	Information Focus
Informant 1	Mosque Administrator of Al-Falah Mosque	Al-Falah Mosque, Surabaya	Sermon theme policy, communication with preachers, congregational development orientation, and the idea of collaboration among mosque administrators, preachers, and congregants.
Informant 2	Media Manager of Al-Falah Mosque	Al-Falah Mosque, Surabaya	Recording, editing, repackaging, YouTube publication, and considerations for not conducting Friday sermon <i>live streaming</i> .
Informant 3	Congregant of Al-Falah Mosque	Al-Falah Mosque, Surabaya	Perceptions of sermon themes, the relevance of sermons to urban life and the workplace, and responses to sermon digitalization.
Informant 4	Mosque Administrator of Ar-Rahmah Mosque	Ar-Rahmah Mosque, Surabaya	Preacher scheduling, theme confirmation, preacher eligibility standards, sermon duration, and responses to congregational feedback.
Informant 5	Da'wah Coordinator of Ar-Rahmah Mosque	Ar-Rahmah Mosque, Surabaya	Consultation mechanisms for preacher selection, considerations for avoiding divisive <i>khilafiyah</i> issues, and sermon evaluation based on congregational aspirations.
Informant 6	Media Manager of Ar-Rahmah Mosque	Ar-Rahmah Mosque, Surabaya	<i>Live streaming</i> , poster production, YouTube publication, short video production, comment management, and <i>take down</i> of sensitive content.
Informant 7	Congregant/Student of Ar-Rahmah Mosque	Ar-Rahmah Mosque, Surabaya	Responses of young congregants to preacher quality, sermon themes, sound quality, and sermon delivery style.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, document tracing, and analysis of the mosque's digital footprints. In-depth interviews were used to explore the experiences, views, policies, and practices of actors in managing Friday sermons. Document tracing was conducted on interview transcripts, schedule notes, theme information, activity posters, and mosque media publications as available. Digital footprint studies were used to understand how Friday sermons do not stop as oral communication in the mosque space but also undergo processes of documentation, editing, dissemination, and response management in the digital space (Miles et al., 2014).

Data analysis was conducted through several stages. First, all interview data were read repeatedly to identify key statements related to the management of Friday sermons. Second, the data were condensed by selecting information relevant to the research focus, particularly regarding the selection of preachers, theme coordination, congregational characteristics, congregation responses, digital publication, and communication risk mitigation. Third, the data were given initial codes, such as 'preacher selection,' 'theme coordination,' 'congregational aspirations,' 'language adjustment,' 'sermon duration,' 'sermon editing,' 'live streaming,' 'content take down,' and 'da'wah digitization.' Fourth, these codes were grouped into four main analytical categories, namely structural collaboration, cultural collaboration, substantive collaboration, and digital collaboration. Fifth, the findings from Al-Falah Mosque and Ar-Rahmah Mosque were compared to identify patterns of similarity, difference, and variation in Friday sermon governance at the two urban mosques (Nowell et al., 2017).

Structural collaboration is understood as institutional work in selecting preachers, arranging schedules, confirming themes, and managing the roles of mosque administrators and

media teams. Cultural collaboration refers to the mosque actors' sensitivity to the congregation's character, including educational background, age, occupation, religious habits, and language needs, with an emphasis on ease of understanding. Substantive collaboration refers to efforts to direct sermon materials so that they are relevant to the needs of the community, do not create divisions, and contain values of moderation such as balance, social responsibility, brotherhood, and public benefit. Meanwhile, digital collaboration refers to the practice of recording, broadcasting, editing, cutting videos, distributing through YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp, as well as managing digital communication risks.

The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data from the takmir, media managers, and congregants (Fusch et al., 2018). For example, the information from the mosque committee *on the importance of contextual sermon themes, compared with the media's coverage of current, often raised themes, as well as the congregation's responses on the relevance of sermons* to the work world and urban life. Technique triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of interviews with documents, posters, digital information, as well as the practice of publishing sermons on mosque social media. In this way, the collaborative governance model of Friday sermons *produced is not derived solely from the researcher's conceptual assumptions but from empirical patterns that emerge in the field data.*

Ethical considerations are maintained by maintaining the confidentiality of informants' data in the presentation of the article. The names of informants can be replaced with codes, such as Takmir Al-Falah, Media Al-Falah, Jamaah Al-Falah, Takmir Ar-Rahmah, Media Ar-Rahmah, and Jamaah Ar-Rahmah. The use of direct quotations is done selectively to strengthen the findings, while information that is sensitive, personal, or potentially misleading is removed or disguised. Thus, this study maintains data accuracy while adhering to academic ethics and exercising caution when examining public religious spaces (Tracy, 2020).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. From the Ritual Pulpit to the Congregational Guidance Room

The first findings indicated that Friday sermons were no longer understood merely as a sequence of weekly rituals, but were beginning to be seen as a space for congregational development. This shift was particularly evident at Al-Falah Mosque. Informant 1 explained that some of the congregation still tend to attend Friday prayers merely to fulfill an obligation. At the same time, the mosque administrators see that the sermon themes so far have often been repetitive, too superficial, and insufficiently address the current issues of the community.

In the interview transcript, Informant 1 stated that the administrators began changing the pattern of sermon management by preparing themes and submitting them to the preachers. He said, "All the study and sermon themes we prepare and submit to them." The same informant also emphasized the need for more contextual themes, such as economics, nationality, and current issues for the community. The phrase "from the pulpit to education" became an important marker that sermons are understood as a tool for guidance, not just routine lectures.

These data indicated a change in institutional orientation. Friday sermons remain an authoritative space for the preacher, but the direction of congregation development has begun to

be managed more consciously by the mosque committee. Thus, Friday sermons are no longer entirely dependent on the individual choices of the preacher but are increasingly being positioned as part of the mosque's preaching design. This is the initial basis for the formation of collaborative management: the mosque committee reads the needs of the congregation, directs the themes, and builds communication with the preacher so that the sermons are more relevant and impactful.

3.1.2. Takmir as the Guardian of the Direction of the Sermon

The second finding showed that the mosque administrators acted as guardians of the direction of the sermon. This role was not always in the form of formal control over the content of the sermon, but appeared in the selection of the preacher, scheduling, theme confirmation, giving directions, and efforts to ensure that the sermon's message does not trigger tension among the congregation.

At Al-Falah Mosque, Informant 1 mentioned the necessity of a "three-way communication: preacher, congregation, and management." He also explained that the management begins by proposing themes, objectives, and a broad outline to the preacher so that the sermon is more directed. Furthermore, the management emphasized that the sources of information can come from anywhere, but when at Al-Falah, they need to follow the choices and direction of Al-Falah's preaching.

At Ar-Rahmah Mosque, the pattern that emerged was slightly different. Informant 4 explained that the theme of the sermon is generally left to the preacher, but is still confirmed with the mosque caretaker, especially approaching certain moments such as Ramadan or specific social events. Informant 4 also mentioned that the scheduling of preachers is done well in advance, including preparing a replacement if a preacher is unable to attend.

Furthermore, Informant 5 explained that the selection of the preacher is carried out through consultation with the foundation's supervisor. Although there is no written SOP, there is an unwritten guideline that the preacher should not bring up topics of "*khilafiyah*" topics that could cause division.

This finding showed that religious moderation did not always take the form of an explicit slogan. It operated through institutional practices: choosing the right preacher, avoiding divisive themes, adjusting topics to the moment, and maintaining the pulpit as a space for soothing preaching. Al-Falah Mosque tends to be more proactive in directing topics, while Ar-Rahmah Mosque is more flexible, maintaining value boundaries through consultation and confirmation. Both indicate that Friday sermons require institutional oversight to remain relevant, moderate, and responsible.

3.1.3. A Sermon Sensitive to the Congregation

The third finding showed that the effectiveness of the Friday sermon was greatly determined by sensitivity to the character of the congregation. This sensitivity was reflected in the choice of language, duration, delivery style, voice quality, and the relevance of the theme to the lives of the congregation.

At Ar-Rahmah Mosque, Informant 4 explained that the duration of the sermon is set at around 15–20 minutes because some of the congregation are workers who need to return to the office. He also mentioned input suggesting that the preacher's language be simpler and less academic. The complaints from the congregation were not primarily about the content of the sermon but rather about the use of overly high-level, difficult-to-understand terms.

Informant 5 added that the preacher's language style needs to be adjusted to the character of the congregation. Some preachers are well-suited to certain congregations because of their academic language style, but they may not be well-suited to other mosques. He also gave an example of a preacher who uses the local language, so not all congregation members understand the sermon message.

Similar feedback came from the young congregation of Ar-Rahmah. Informant 7 assessed that the preachers are generally competent and adequate, but there are still technical notes, such as voices that are hard to hear on the second floor or intonation that is not loud enough.

These data showed that sermon moderation was reflected not only in major themes such as tolerance, nationalism, and anti-violence. Moderation also appears in the way the message is delivered. Language that is too elevated can create distance between the preacher and the congregation. A sermon that is too long can neglect the needs of working attendees. Poor sound quality can prevent the message from being effectively conveyed. Therefore, Friday sermon management needs to pay attention to substance, communication, and service techniques simultaneously.

3.1.4. Mosque Media as a Digital Da'wah Curator

The fourth finding showed that mosque media not only functioned as a documenter of activities, but also as a curator of da'wah messages. The role of the media was evident in the processes of recording, editing, repackaging, and live streaming, as well as in distribution via YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp, and in risk mitigation for sensitive parts of the sermon.

At Al-Falah Mosque, Informant 2 explained that the Friday sermon is not broadcast live. The sermon is recorded first, edited, shortened to about 10 minutes, and then uploaded to YouTube after the Friday prayer. The reason for not doing live streaming is caution against digital risks. Informant 2 stated, 'If we do live streaming, later, if something goes wrong in an era like this, it could become a blunder.' He also explained that the media team creates short clips, such as a one-minute booster, for Instagram and Facebook.

Unlike Al-Falah, Ar-Rahmah Mosque broadcasts the Friday sermon live. Informant 6 explained that the sermon is broadcast so that it is documented, can be rewatched by the congregation, and can be accessed by female congregants who do not attend the Friday prayers in person. However, they also recognize the risks of digital spaces. If comments create a negative atmosphere, the comments can be deleted. If any parts of the content are problematic, the media team can take them down or edit them.

These findings indicated the presence of two models of sermon digitalization. Al-Falah Mosque uses the record–edit–upload model, while Ar-Rahmah Mosque uses the live-streaming, documentation, post-broadcast mitigation model. This difference shows that sermon digitalization is not just about the use of media, but is part of the management of religious messages. When sermons enter the digital space, messages can be clipped, spread, commented on, reinterpreted, or even misused. Therefore, the media team becomes an important actor in ensuring that the preaching messages are conveyed properly, do not cause misunderstandings, and remain in line with the values of moderation.

3.1.5. Congregation as a Source of Sermon Feedback

The fifth finding indicated that congregants were not passive recipients of the message. They respond to the sermon themes, delivery style, duration, voice quality, material relevance,

and sermon digitalization. Although not yet fully systematic, congregants' feedback has become part of the sermon evaluation process.

At Al-Falah Mosque, Informant 3 assessed that the sermon themes were quite diverse and relevant, covering aspects of worship, social matters, morals, work ethics, responsibility, and integrity. The sermon was considered helpful for the congregation in understanding Islamic teachings in the context of work, education, and urban community life. One congregation member's response indicated that the sermon about trustworthiness and consistency encouraged them to be more disciplined and value time. Another congregation member assessed that the sermon provided insight into religion and raised awareness of responsibility and professionalism in work.

From a digitalization perspective, congregants view the publication of sermons on YouTube as a means of expanding the reach of preaching. However, congregants also distinguish between the spiritual experience of being physically present in the mosque and that of watching via digital media. Digital sermons are considered useful as a complement, a means of documentation, and a way to reach the younger generation, but they do not fully replace the devotion and togetherness of congregants in the mosque space.

At the Ar-Rahmah Mosque, Informant 5 explained that the evaluation of the sermon is carried out based on the congregation's aspirations. Feedback can be given verbally, via WhatsApp, or during a friendly interaction with the preacher after Friday prayers. Informant 4 also acknowledged that a specific survey on the congregation's satisfaction and understanding of the sermon has not been conducted systematically, although it is considered important to develop.

These findings showed that the congregation held an important position in the governance of sermons. They are not only objects of preaching but also sources of information about whether the sermon is relevant, easy to understand, impactful, or needs improvement. However, the feedback mechanism is still largely informal. Therefore, strengthening sermon governance in the future requires a more structured evaluation instrument, such as regular surveys, digital feedback forms, or summaries of congregational aspirations.

Based on the five findings above, the governance of Friday sermons at Al-Falah Mosque and Ar-Rahmah Mosque can be understood as a collaborative process involving the administrators, preachers, mosque media, and congregants. This process operates through four main dimensions:

Table 2. *Four Dimensions of Collaborative Governance in Friday Sermon Practices*

Dimension	Forms of Practice	Meaning of the Finding
Structural	Preacher selection, scheduling, theme confirmation, and guidance from mosque administrators	Friday sermons do not occur spontaneously but are institutionally managed.
Cultural	Adjustment of language, duration, delivery style, and sensitivity to congregational characteristics	Religious moderation emerges through attentiveness to congregational diversity and needs.
Substantive	Contemporary themes, integrity, economic issues, national concerns, and avoidance of divisive issues	Sermon content is directed to be relevant, constructive, and socially calming.
Digital	Recording, editing, <i>live streaming</i> , short videos, comment management, and <i>take down</i> of sensitive content	Sermon messages are curated to remain safe and effective in digital public spaces.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. From the Content of the Sermon to the Management of the Sermon

The findings of this study indicate that the Friday sermon is not adequately understood as merely a religious text or the individual performance of the preacher. At Al-Falah Mosque and Ar-Rahmah Mosque, the Friday sermon is shaped through an institutional process involving the mosque management, the preacher, media managers, and the congregation. The preacher does serve as the main actor in delivering the message, but the process before and after the sermon shows the role of other actors in determining the direction, relevance, distribution, and evaluation of the sermon message (Wicaksono et al., 2022).

These findings extend the tendency of previous studies, which mostly read Friday sermons as texts or religious discourse. Research by Bowo (2023), Turohmah and Amalih (2025), and Wicaksono et al. (2022) confirms that Friday sermons can contain values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, balance, anti-violence, and national commitment. However, the focus of these studies remains on the question of whether moderation values are present in the sermon content. This study goes further by showing that moderation values are not only present in the content of the sermons but also in the institutional mechanisms that regulate how sermons are planned, who is given the authority to speak, which themes are prioritized, how the language is adjusted to the congregation, and how the sermon messages are disseminated in digital spaces (Bowo, 2023; Turohmah & Amalih, 2025).

Thus, the main contribution of this research is shifting attention from sermon content to sermon governance. Religious moderation in Friday sermons depends not only on the individual capacity of the preacher but also on the ecosystem of mosque governance. When the mosque management begins to arrange themes, provide guidelines, confirm titles, select preachers who avoid divisive issues, and respond to the congregation's aspirations, the Friday sermon becomes an institutional product. In this position, the Friday pulpit does not stand alone, but becomes part of the mosque's religious communication system.

3.2.2. Collaborative Governance in Urban Mosque Spaces

The collaborative governance framework helps to explain that the management of Friday sermons does not occur through a single actor, but through the interconnection of various actors. In governance studies, collaborative governance emphasizes the importance of coordination among parties, facilitative leadership, trust, shared understanding, and collective action in achieving public goals. When applied to the context of a mosque, these public goals are the maintenance of the Friday pulpit as a space for preaching that is educational, comforting, relevant, and does not divide the congregation (Emerson et al., 2012).

The findings of this study indicate that collaboration in mosques does not always take the form of official forums or written SOPs. In Al-Falah Mosque, collaboration is evident in thematic direction, communication with the khatib, and the idea of a three-way communication model among the administrators, khatib, and congregation. In Ar-Rahmah Mosque, collaboration is visible through consultation of the khatib's name with the foundation supervisor, theme confirmation, long-term scheduling, as well as responses to the congregation's aspirations. These differences indicate that collaborative governance in mosques can function through formal, semi-formal, or informal mechanisms (Bianchi et al., 2021).

This is important because mosques, as religious institutions, do not always operate according to the logic of modern, entirely written bureaucracy. Many decisions are made through trust, leadership, deliberation, verbal communication, the experience of administrators, and sensitivity to the congregation. Therefore, collaborative governance in the context of mosques needs to be understood more in cultural terms. Collaboration does not always have to take the form of a formal administrative structure, but can also take the form of consultation, guidance, confirmation, communication habits, and carefulness in maintaining congregational harmony (Kinder et al., 2021).

In the context of urban mosques, this pattern becomes increasingly important. City congregants have diverse social backgrounds: workers, professionals, students, nearby residents, transit congregants, retirees, and a digital audience. This diversity demands sermon management that is not only normatively correct but also communicatively appropriate. This is where the mosque management acts as a guardian of balance between the authority of the preacher, the needs of the congregants, and the institutional direction of the mosque.

3.2.3. Religious Moderation as an Institutional Practice

This research shows that religious moderation does not always appear through the explicit use of the term 'moderation.' In many cases, the value of moderation is actually visible through simple but important institutional practices: avoiding divisive khilafiyah themes, selecting preachers who are acceptable to the congregation, simplifying the language of sermons, adjusting the duration to the needs of working congregants, and ensuring that digital content does not cause commotion. (Safei & Armstrong, 2024).

These findings enrich the understanding of religious moderation. Moderation does not only mean discussing tolerance, nationality, or anti-violence verbally in sermons. Moderation also appears in the way mosques manage religious communication so that it does not create distance, tension, or misunderstandings among the congregation. In other words, religious moderation operates on two levels simultaneously: the level of the message's substance and the level of message governance (Jailani, 2024).

At the substantive level, moderation is evident in the encouragement for sermons to address themes that are relevant to the congregation's life, such as trustworthiness, integrity, economy, nationality, work ethic, and social responsibility. These themes indicate that Friday sermons can foster piety that is not only ritualistic but also social and professional. At the governance level, moderation is apparent in the mechanisms for selecting preachers, managing duration, choosing language, handling congregational aspirations, and mitigating digital risks (Qoumas et al., 2024).

Thus, this study offers a perspective that religious moderation in mosques is not only a matter of the content of sermons, but also a matter of how mosques manage religious authority. A moderate mosque is not merely one that invites a preacher to deliver a moderation-themed sermon, but rather one with mechanisms to keep the pulpit inclusive, proportional, relevant, and non-divisive.

3.2.4. Digitization of Sermons and Expansion of Da'wah Governance

One of the important findings of this study is the entry of mosque media as an actor in the governance of sermons. The role of media is not merely technical, such as recording or uploading videos. Mosque media has become a curator of da'wah messages. It determines how sermons are

documented, cut, edited, given visual packaging, distributed, and, if necessary, taken down from digital spaces.

This finding expands the field of study on digital da'wah. The research of Muiz, Taufikkurrohman, and Sattar (2025) shows that Friday sermons on NU Online function as a medium for digital da'wah communication through the framing of moderation messages. This study complements that research by showing that, at the mosque level, sermon digitization is not only related to text framing but also to risk management. When sermons enter YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, or other social media channels, the sermon message is no longer entirely under the control of the mosque space. It can be cut, commented on, misunderstood, or circulated out of context (Muiz et al., 2025).

The comparison between Al-Falah Mosque and Ar-Rahmah Mosque shows two different digital management models. Al-Falah Mosque chooses the record–edit–upload model. This model demonstrates caution because the sermons are not broadcast live but are curated in advance to avoid potential digital mistakes or blunders. In contrast, Ar-Rahmah Mosque adopts the live-streaming, documentation, and post-broadcast mitigation model. This model provides faster access to congregants, including female congregants and audiences who are not physically present, but still requires mechanisms for deleting comments, editing, or taking down content if sensitive material arises (Nase et al., 2025).

Both models show that digital da'wah cannot be separated from governance. The wider the reach of the message, the greater the need to manage communication risks. In this context, religious moderation is maintained not only by the preacher at the pulpit but also by the media team in the digital space. Editing, selecting video clips, managing comments, and decisions about whether to broadcast or remove content are part of the moderation practice (Yilmaz et al., 2021).

3.2.5. Collaborative Governance Model of Friday Sermons

Based on the analysis of findings, this study formulates a Collaborative Friday Sermon Governance Model. This model consists of four main dimensions: structural, cultural, substantive, and digital.

First, the structural dimension concerns the institutional mechanisms for selecting the preacher, arranging the schedule, confirming the theme, providing guidance, and preparing a replacement preacher. This dimension shows that Friday sermons do not occur spontaneously but are part of a mosque management system.

Second, the cultural dimension relates to sensitivity to the congregation's character. Mosques need to understand the background of the congregation, education level, occupation, age, religious habits, and their communication needs. Adjustments in language, duration, delivery style, and voice quality are part of this dimension.

Third, the substantive dimension relates to the orientation of the sermon's content. The sermon needs to be directed to be relevant to the congregation's life, address current issues, build social ethics, and avoid themes that have the potential to be divisive. A moderate sermon's substance not only speaks about tolerance but also about trustworthiness, integrity, responsibility, brotherhood, and public welfare.

Fourth, the digital dimension concerns the management of the sermon's message once it enters the media space. This dimension includes recording, live streaming, editing, making short

videos, distribution through digital channels, managing comments, and mitigating the risks of sensitive content.

These four dimensions show that the Friday sermon as an instrument of religious moderation cannot rely solely on the preacher. It requires collaborative governance that connects mosque actors within a single religious communication ecosystem. In brief, this model can be depicted in Table 3:

Table 3. Collaborative Friday Sermon Governance Model: Focus, Actors, and Moderating Function

Dimension	Governance Focus	Main Actors	Moderating Function
Structural	Preacher selection, scheduling, theme confirmation	Mosque administrators and preachers	Maintaining the direction and credibility of the pulpit
Cultural	Language, duration, delivery style, congregational characteristics	Mosque administrators, preachers, and congregants	Adjusting the message to congregational needs
Substantive	Themes, values, and social relevance	Preachers and mosque administrators	Ensuring that sermon content remains relevant and non-divisive
Digital	Streaming, editing, distribution, and risk mitigation	Mosque media team and mosque administrators	Managing the wider circulation of religious messages in digital spaces

This model complements previous studies that have largely treated the sermon as a text, content, or means of preaching. Within the two cases examined, the Friday sermon appears as a product of collaborative governance. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation through sermons is not sufficient by merely asking the preacher to deliver a moderation theme; it requires a sermon management system that includes the selection of preachers, theme coordination, congregation sensitivity, digital curation, and continuous evaluation.

3.2.6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the study of religious moderation, mosque governance, and public preaching communication. Its main contribution is the introduction of the concept of sermon governance as a new analytical framework for the study of Friday sermons. While previous research focused more on the content of the sermons or the congregants' responses, this study shows that the institutional processes behind the sermons also determine the quality of the religious messages received by the congregation.

Practically, this research provides input for mosque administrators that the management of Friday sermons needs to be carried out more systematically without eliminating the flexibility of preaching. Mosques can begin by preparing an annual theme map, creating a database of preachers' competencies, opening feedback channels for congregants, strengthening coordination between administrators and the media, and developing simple guidelines for publishing sermons in digital spaces. These steps are not intended to limit the authority of the preacher, but to ensure that Friday sermons become increasingly relevant, communicative, and impactful for the congregation.

Thus, this discussion emphasizes that religious moderation through Friday sermons is not only a matter of message content but also of governance. Mosques that can manage sermons collaboratively are more likely of make the Friday pulpit a space for congregational development, strengthen public ethics, and spread calming religious values in urban and digital communities.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Friday sermon can serve as an instrument to strengthen religious moderation if managed as a collaborative institutional practice, rather than merely as an individual performance by the preacher. Findings at Al-Falah Mosque and Ar-Rahmah Mosque in Surabaya indicate that the Friday sermon is shaped through the involvement of the mosque board, the preacher, media managers, and the congregation. The mosque board plays a role in maintaining the direction of the sermon through the selection of preachers, scheduling, theme confirmation, and caution regarding issues that could potentially cause division. The preacher plays a role in conveying religious messages, but the effectiveness of the message is greatly influenced by sensitivity to the congregation's character, choice of language, duration, delivery style, and the relevance of the theme to the social life of the urban congregation. Thus, moderation in religion during Friday sermons is not only reflected through the content of the message that emphasizes tolerance or nationality, but also through the management that ensures the pulpit remains educational, contextual, soothing, and responsible.

The main contribution of this research lies in the formulation of the Collaborative Friday Sermon Governance Model, which operates through four dimensions: structural, cultural, substantive, and digital. The structural dimension is evident in the selection of preachers, scheduling, and theme coordination; the cultural dimension is visible in the adjustment of language, duration, and communication style to the character of the congregation; the substantive dimension is reflected in the reinforcement of current themes such as trustworthiness, integrity, work ethics, brotherhood, and the avoidance of divisive doctrinal issues; meanwhile, the digital dimension is visible in the practices of recording, editing, live streaming, short video packaging, comment management, and the takedown of sensitive content. This model complements previous studies that have largely treated sermons as texts or preaching material. Practically, this research recommends that mosques develop a more systematic mechanism for sermon evaluation, a database of preacher competencies, a map of sermon themes, as well as digital publication guidelines so that the Friday pulpit becomes increasingly relevant as a space for congregation development and strengthening religious moderation in urban communities.

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