

## **Integration of Religious Moderation Values in the Islamic Religious Education Learning**

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### **Abstract**

*Islamic Religious Education in schools plays a crucial role in integrating religious moderation values to prevent intolerance, which is frequently observed among adolescents aged 14–20. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis. The research subjects include the school principal, vice principal, and Islamic Religious Education educators. The findings indicate that the religious moderation values integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning include tolerance, balance, harmony, humanism, equality, patriotism (hubbul wathon), mutual respect, forgiveness, cooperation, justice, discipline, and independence. These values are implemented through various approaches and integration strategies in Islamic Religious Education learning. The strategies include the traditional integration strategy, which emphasizes direct advice; the free-choice integration strategy, which allows students to internalize values independently; the reflective strategy, which connects theory with real-life experiences; the transinternal strategy, which emphasizes inner involvement; and the transdisciplinary strategy, which links religious values with other fields of knowledge. This study highlights that integrating religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning is essential for shaping students into moderate, inclusive individuals with a balanced religious perspective. By employing appropriate strategies, schools can foster a harmonious educational environment free from intolerance.*

**Keywords:** *Integration, Religious Moderation, Learning Implementation*

## **INTRUDUCTION**

Indonesia is a multicultural and developing country that is unparalleled by other nations. This is because Indonesia is the only country that possesses diversity in all aspects of life, including ethnicity, race, language, religion, and culture.<sup>1</sup> Diversity is a blessing from Allah SWT for the people of Indonesia, serving as a strength to foster unity and an extraordinary potential for advancing the nation. Moreover, Islam views diversity as a means for mutual understanding, regardless of the differences that exist.<sup>2</sup>

Looking back, it is evident that religiously motivated violence is not a new phenomenon but has long occurred within Indonesian society. Notable cases include the religious conflict in Poso (1992–2001), the dispute over the construction of GKI Yasmin Church in Bogor (2008), conflicts related to Christianization issues in Aceh Singkil (1979–2012), religious tensions in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra (2010–2016), the Sunni-Shia conflict in Puger, East Java (2013), and religious conflict in Talikora, Papua.

With the occurrence of various religious social conflicts in Indonesia, two cases of radicalism and terrorism were recorded in 2021. The first was a suicide bombing at the Makassar Cathedral Church on March 28, 2021, and the second was an attack on the Indonesian National Police Headquarters (Mabes Polri) on March 31. Both incidents were suspected to be driven by radical ideologies, with the perpetrators justifying their actions under the guise of jihad.<sup>3</sup>

Another alarming fact reveals that 59.1% of terrorism cases involve individuals under the age of 30, with young people aged 17–24 being the primary targets for the spread of extremist ideologies. Additionally, a survey by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) indicates that 80% of the younger generation is vulnerable to extremism due to a lack of exposure to an inclusive understanding of Islam and a deficiency in critical thinking skills. Millennials, in particular, tend to accept information uncritically, often consuming content from various ideological and informational sources without verification. This lack of critical thinking makes them highly susceptible to radicalism and intolerance, turning them into easy targets for extremist groups seeking to recruit and indoctrinate followers.<sup>4</sup>

From the cases mentioned above, it is evident that the concept of jihad is often misinterpreted as a justification for violence and a source of interreligious conflict. This misunderstanding has further damaged the perception of Islam, a religion originally known for its compassion and mercy. Such misinterpretations have led to widespread negative opinions about Islam, making it seem as though the religion endorses violence as a means of resolving conflicts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing incidents of radicalism and terrorism carried out in the name of Islam, both globally and in Indonesia, have contributed to the stigmatization of Muslims. The concept of jihad is frequently accused of being the root cause of religiously motivated violence. As a result, Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, such as madrasas and pesantrens, have also faced accusations of fostering radical ideologies. Studies on radicalism and terrorism suggest that certain Islamic educational institutions may have propagated fundamentalist and radical teachings to their students.

This issue highlights the ongoing challenges faced by religious communities in Indonesia. Given these challenges, it is not surprising that the future of religious tolerance in the country still has a long way to go. Previous research has identified several strategies for maintaining national unity, including mutual respect, cooperation, care for others, appreciation of diversity, a strong sense of community, sincerity, tolerance, and the enforcement of fair legal systems.

Fitriyah, in her research, states that cases of intolerance in Indonesian society, particularly among teenagers, can be addressed through a specialized educational model that instills religious values. Religious education plays a crucial role as it significantly influences both students and society. It serves as a safeguard against misconceptions and deviations, broadens students' understanding of good and evil, and strengthens their faith.<sup>5</sup> The emergence of the concept of religious moderation in Indonesia is closely linked to the rising issues of intolerance, radicalism, and terrorism. Religious moderation promotes a way of life that prioritizes tolerance and seeks a middle ground between opposing extremes. In essence, moderation involves shifting one's perspective from a rigid and exclusive stance toward a more open and tolerant outlook.<sup>6</sup>

Islamic moderation, or moderate Islam, in the field of education encompasses several values and principles that can be integrated into various subjects in schools, madrasahs, and even higher education institutions. According to Hermawan, fostering and shaping a moderate attitude in students requires the internalization of at least four core values: Tasamuh (tolerance), I'tidal (justice), Tawazun (balance), Al-musawa (equality)<sup>7</sup>. Ach. Sayyi further explains that Islamic moderation includes several values that can be incorporated into different learning materials, especially in Islamic Religious Education and pesantren-based education. These values include tolerance, inclusivity, harmony, independence, justice, democracy, balance, mutual respect, forgiveness, humanism, and *hep asor* (humility), *ngabuleh* (devotion), and *istiqamah* (steadfastness).<sup>8</sup>

However, in reality, many schools still make minimal efforts to incorporate the values of religious moderation into the learning process of Islamic Religious Education. In several educational institutions, whether under the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) or the Ministry of Religious Affairs, education serves as a crucial arena for reinforcing the values of Pancasila and religious moderation. One of the most effective ways to strengthen these values is through religious education.

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In fact, Islamic teachings clearly emphasize the importance of moderation, as reflected in the following verse from the Qur'an: Surah Al-Baqarah (2:143):

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّعَ إِيمَانِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَّءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

Translation: "And thus We have made you (the Muslim community) a justly balanced nation so that you may be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger (Muhammad) will be a witness over you. And We did not make the qiblah (prayer direction) which you previously faced except to test who would follow the Messenger and who would turn back. Indeed, (the change of qiblah) was difficult, except for those whom Allah has guided. And Allah would never let your faith go to waste. Truly, Allah is Most Compassionate and Most Merciful to mankind." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:143)

Islamic Religious Education, like other subjects, has specific learning objectives. The goal of Islamic Religious Education is to cultivate students' faith, understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islamic teachings, enabling them to become devout Muslims who believe in and fear Allah SWT while embodying noble character in their personal lives, communities, and as citizens of the nation.

The implementation of religious moderation values by Islamic Religious Education teachers in schools is primarily carried out through classroom instruction based on the syllabus, which is further developed by the teacher. These values are then reinforced through interactions within the school environment. Among various Islamic Religious Education topics, the most emphasized is the subject of akhlaq (morality), with its core competencies focusing on ethical behavior and character development.

## METHOD

The subjects of this research are educators, particularly Islamic Religious Education teachers, the Vice Principal for Curriculum, and a selection of students. These subjects and informants are also involved in cross-checking the validity of the collected data, as they serve as feedback providers for data verification.<sup>9</sup> The selection of research subjects and informants was conducted purposively. The researcher adapted to the environment as an ordinary individual with no prior knowledge, striving to maintain ethical standards throughout the research process.<sup>10</sup>

The data collection techniques in this research were conducted through observation. The observation technique requires direct monitoring of conditions, processes, activities, or behaviors related to the integration of religious moderation values. This study also employs interviews by posing several questions to selected informants.<sup>11</sup> The research utilizes data analysis techniques, including data reduction, data display, and data verification. The validation of research findings is conducted to obtain natural conclusions based on specific criteria, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.<sup>12</sup>

## RESULTS

### Values of Religious Moderation

The integration of religious moderation values through Islamic Religious Education encompasses several key aspects, including tolerance, democracy, and humanism. The implementation of these values in schools involves togetherness, helping others, mutual respect, and forgiveness. Schools have already incorporated values such as equality, independence, and tolerance into their educational processes.

The aspects of religious moderation values include balance, mutual deliberation (*musyawarah*), justice (*adalah*), tolerance, and democracy. Efforts to integrate these values into Islamic Religious Education learning have been conducted by incorporating democratic values, tolerance, patriotism, discipline, justice, and mutual respect into the curriculum. School principals encourage the integration of democracy, tolerance, balance, friendship (*ukhuwah*), forgiveness, and equality into every learning process.

In practice, the integration of religious moderation values in schools is based on fundamental principles, maintaining a balance between divine revelation and human reason, between physical and spiritual aspects, rights and obligations, sincerity and responsibility, individual and collective interests, as well as facts and opinions. Therefore, essential characteristics of religious moderation include knowledge, broad understanding and experience, emotional control, and meticulousness in decision-making. Ultimately, educators play a key role in promoting moderation in speech, attitude, and thought within the learning environment.

Observations in the research location reveal that the integration of religious moderation values into school activities includes democracy, tolerance, patriotism (*hubbul wathan*), equality, and humanism. These values have become an integral part of the mindset and behavior of both educators and students, fostering a school culture of mutual respect, appreciation, and understanding. The implementation of religious moderation has evolved into a school-wide culture, making the institution a child-friendly school.

The practical application of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning includes tolerance, balance, humanism, equality, patriotism, mutual respect, forgiveness, cooperation, justice, consistency, discipline, and independence. This aligns with the perspectives of Hermawan and Fithriyah, who highlight three key religious moderation values: Tolerance – Defined as an attitude of mutual respect among fellow citizens and all of God’s creations, regardless of differences in ethnicity, language, culture, traditions, religious understanding, and personal beliefs. Justice – Defined as being impartial, objective, and fair, without bias or oppression. Balance – Defined as a harmonious approach to religious devotion, ensuring unity among fellow citizens, religious communities, and the relationship between humans and God. By integrating these values into education, schools play a vital role in fostering a peaceful, inclusive, and balanced society, ensuring that students grow into individuals who uphold the principles of religious moderation in their daily lives.<sup>13</sup>

Religious moderation in Islam encompasses several fundamental values that promote balance, justice, and inclusivity. These values include: Tolerance (*Tasamuh*) – The ability to respect and appreciate differences in beliefs, cultures, and opinions without forcing one’s views on others. *Al-Tawassuth* (Moderation) – Adopting a middle path, avoiding extremes in religious practice and interpretation. Tajrid (Purification) – Focusing on the essence of faith while avoiding unnecessary rigidity in religious matters. *Tajdid* (Renewal) – Encouraging critical thinking and renewal of religious understanding in response to contemporary challenges.<sup>14</sup>

According to Sholeh, religious moderation consists of several key values, including: Tolerance (*Tasamuh*) – Respecting differences in beliefs while maintaining one’s own convictions. Harmony (*Harmonis*) – Promoting peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths and backgrounds. Inclusivity (Inklusif) – Embracing diversity and avoiding exclusivism in religious and social interactions. Mutual Respect (*Saling Menghargai*) – Acknowledging and valuing the beliefs and perspectives of others without compromising personal faith. These values emphasize a balanced and open-minded approach to religion, ensuring that religious practices contribute to social unity rather than division.<sup>15</sup>

### **Implementasi Integrasi Nilai Moderasi Beragama dalam Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Islamic Religious Education**

The implementation of religious moderation values is realized through several integration strategies, especially in the Islamic Religious Education learning process, which includes essential components such as the annual program (Prota), semester program (Promes), syllabus, minimum mastery criteria, effective week analysis, and lesson plans (RPP). The integration of religious moderation values in schools serves as a preventive measure to ensure that students, particularly teenagers, are not easily exposed to radical, extreme, and intolerant ideologies. This is implemented in the learning process through a traditional integration strategy, which involves delivering information, guidance, and advice.

The traditional integration strategy provides direct education to students on religious moderation values such as tolerance, democracy, love for the nation (*hubbul wathan*), mutual respect

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and appreciation, and a humanistic attitude. Through this strategy, educators play a crucial role in shaping students' character, speech, and behavior to adopt moderate perspectives in their daily lives. Another approach to integrating religious moderation is through a free choice strategy, where educators introduce students to all aspects of religious moderation values, but students are given the freedom to choose which values they wish to adopt and develop. However, educators must serve as role models (*uswatun hasanah*) by embodying these values in their actions. Ultimately, both teachers and students actively contribute to and participate in school activities, particularly in implementing religious moderation values.

This integration aligns with Fithriyah's perspective, which states that religious moderation values can be integrated through trans-internal and reflective strategies.<sup>16</sup> The trans-internal strategy fosters behavior, attitudes, mindset, knowledge, and awareness about the greatness of Allah, while the reflective strategy encourages appreciation for all of Allah's creations, striving for good deeds, and continuous self-improvement. These strategies ensure that religious moderation becomes an embedded mindset and practice in students' daily lives.<sup>17</sup>

The traditional integration strategy is defined as the provision of advice or indoctrination.<sup>18</sup> This strategy can be implemented through the delivery of advice or reminders about the values of truth and goodness, using approaches that touch emotions or the heart and inspire enthusiasm for practicing them. Meanwhile, the free integration strategy is an effort to merge values.<sup>19</sup> Religious moderation in a free approach is not limited to a specific set of values; students can absorb various religious moderation values according to their own preferences and desires. The role of educators is merely to provide examples of actions that reflect each taught value. However, students remain under the close supervision of educators to ensure consistent practice and integration of these values into their daily lives.

The trans-internal integration strategy is an effort to transform values, followed by a process of value transaction and trans-internalization to students. In the context of integrating religious moderation values in schools, both students and educators actively engage in communication, not only through verbal and physical interactions but also through deeper, personal engagement in their communication.

The reflective integration strategy is a learning approach that combines theoretical and empirical perspectives or utilizes both deductive and inductive approaches. This strategy is commonly employed by educators across various subjects. Reflective learning provides opportunities for students to analyze their experiences individually, allowing them to learn from their own experiences. Additionally, this strategy fosters creative thinking in attitudes and encourages student independence.

The transdisciplinary integration strategy represents the second stage of *takamul al-'ulum wa izdiwaj al-ma'arif* (the paradigm of interconnection and integration of knowledge), which aligns with the continuous development and advancement of science. The relationship between science and religious, humanities, and social disciplines in the modern era is characterized by semi-permeability (mutual influence), intersubjective testability (verifiability between disciplines), and creative imagination.

The integration of religious moderation values in Islamic education (Islamic Religious Education) in schools is implemented through various strategies and approaches, including: 1) traditional integration strategy; 2) free integration strategy; 3) reflective integration strategy; 4) transdisciplinary integration strategy; and 5) trans-internal integration strategy. Based on research findings, these integration strategies are highly effective in providing students with an initial understanding of the principles of religious moderation.

## DISCUSSION

The integration of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education emphasizes tolerance, democracy, and humanism. These values are manifested through togetherness, mutual assistance, respect, and forgiveness. Schools have implemented principles of equality, independence, and tolerance in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, aspects of moderation such as

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balance, deliberation, justice, and friendship are incorporated into every learning activity to shape students into individuals with a moderate character.

In practice, religious moderation is based on maintaining balance between divine revelation and reason, between physical and spiritual needs, as well as between rights and responsibilities. Educators are expected to have extensive knowledge, emotional resilience, and attentiveness in guiding students to be moderate in their thinking, speech, and actions. The implementation of these values in schools fosters a culture of mutual respect and understanding, creating an inclusive and child-friendly educational environment.

The implementation of religious moderation values in the Islamic Religious Education Lesson Plan (RPP) is carried out through various strategies, including the traditional approach, which instills values through direct advice, and the free-choice strategy, which allows students to select the values they wish to explore further. Additionally, reflective and trans-internal strategies are used to connect theoretical concepts with real-life experiences, reinforcing the internalization of these values in students' daily lives.

The integration of moderation values also involves a transdisciplinary approach, linking religious knowledge with science, social studies, and the humanities in a dynamic manner. This approach ensures that students not only understand moderation in theory but can also apply it in their lives. Through these various strategies, religious moderation education aims to cultivate a generation that is tolerant, just, and possesses a balanced and inclusive understanding of Islam.

## CONCLUSION

The research findings on the integration of religious moderation values in Islamic education (Islamic Religious Education) learning in schools indicate that several aspects of religious moderation values are integrated into the learning process. These values include tolerance, balance, harmony, humanism, equality, *hubbul wathan* (love for the homeland), mutual respect, forgiveness, helping one another, justice, consistency, discipline, and independence. The diversity of these religious moderation values is incorporated into Islamic Religious Education learning through various approaches and integration strategies, namely: 1) traditional integration strategy; 2) free integration strategy; 3) reflective integration strategy; 4) transdisciplinary integration strategy; and 5) trans-internal integration strategy. These research findings were obtained from various informants, including educators, educational staff, and students in schools.

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