

Research Article

Integration of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Religious Education Learning and its Impact on Religious Tolerance of Students at State Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City

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Abstract: This research focuses on integrating the values of religious moderation in the school environment, particularly through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Padangsidempuan City Public Junior High Schools. Amid the diverse religious backgrounds of students, education is needed that not only emphasizes religious knowledge but also fosters tolerance, respect, and the ability to coexist with differences. This study aims to describe the integration process of religious moderation values in PAI learning and analyze its impact on students' religious tolerance. A qualitative approach with field research was used, involving interviews, observations, and documentation from principals, PAI teachers, and students. Data analysis followed stages of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation for validity. The results indicate that the integration of religious moderation values has been carried out in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of learning. Teachers have incorporated values like tolerance, justice, moderation, deliberation, equality, and anti-violence into the curriculum. The impact of this integration is seen in improved mutual respect among students, reduced conflicts, and a more harmonious learning atmosphere. Therefore, PAI learning plays a significant role in shaping moderate and tolerant student character.

Keywords: Educational Learning; PAI; Religious Moderation; Tolerance; Value Integration.

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1. Introduction

While many advocate for religious moderation, the practice of religion among Muslims is increasingly concerning. Radical movements within religion are also on the rise, and terrorism is not diminishing (Albana, 2024). We must certainly investigate the causes, as theoretically, the more people advocate for religious moderation, the better the practice of religion will be, thanks to the numerous appeals from religious figures and clerics. If the opposite were to occur, something must be amiss in our society. (Suharto, 2019).

According to M. Quraish Shihab, religion resides in one's conscience, allowing one to freely choose their own religion. Religious moderation is not merely an attitude of tolerance but must be embodied in daily life (Shihab, 2019). Radicalism is a belief that seeks to radically change the nation's ideology, regardless of existing circumstances and conditions. Ultimately, this situation will lead to national disintegration. Thus, the concept of religious moderation stems from the realization that it is impossible to equate one's beliefs. Therefore, what can be done is to be tolerant of existing diversity.

The commitment to religious moderation is not merely a confession but also an actualization. From an educational perspective, schools are the cradle of a moderate spirit and a center for structured learning of knowledge, skills, and habits. Education is defined as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and process that allows students to actively develop their potential to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills necessary for themselves, society, the nation, and the state (Hasan, 2021) .

Religious moderation in education aims to shape the character of students who are tolerant, open to differences, and able to coexist peacefully in a pluralistic society, making it crucial to prevent radicalism and foster a sense of togetherness amidst religious and cultural plurality. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools plays a strategic role in instilling these values. As a subject that not only transfers religious knowledge, PAI also plays a role in shaping students' character through internalizing the values of Islamic teachings that are *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all the universe) (Zuhdi, 2015) . However, the implementation of the values of religious moderation in PAI has not been fully optimal. Symptoms of intolerance among students are still found, both in the form of verbal and discriminatory actions (Raihani, 2014) .

Some key steps that can be taken include implementing the values of religious moderation to foster tolerant student character. Religious moderation education plays a crucial role in instilling a moderate attitude, prioritizing the principles of tolerance and mutual respect, thereby minimizing students' risk of acting outside the bounds of their beliefs and fostering character that aligns with what is taught. An understanding of religious moderation is implemented by broadening the perspective of humanity beyond religious boundaries. The community is taught to work together harmoniously, regardless of religious background, for the sake of shared progress (Suryadi, 2022) .

Based on the explanation and initial findings above, this study conducted an in-depth study of the integration of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education subjects to increase religious tolerance among students at public junior high schools in Padangsidimpuan City. The purpose of this study was to describe the integration of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education subjects at public junior high schools. in Padangsidimpuan City and analyzing the integration of religious moderation values can increase religious tolerance of students at State Junior High Schools in Padangsidimpuan City.

2. Literature Review

The Concept of Value Integration

According to Poerwadarminta, as quoted by Trianto, integration is the process of making several parts into a whole and complete whole (Trianto, 2007) . Sanusi stated that integration refers to a complete unity, without experiencing division or separation. Integration includes fulfilling the needs and completeness of the elements combined in a system that has a close relationship, harmony, and full of togetherness between its members. Meanwhile, integration in the context of value education is understood as the process of uniting certain values into another concept so as to form a whole, comprehensive, and inseparable unity. In other words, this is a blending process that produces harmony between value elements in a coherent structure.

Religious Moderation

According to Quraish Shihab, moderation, or *wasathiyah*, is a balance encompassing all worldly and hereafter issues. This must be accompanied by adjustment to the circumstances faced, in accordance with religious guidance and the objective circumstances experienced. This means not simply presenting two poles and then choosing what lies in between. *Wasathiyah* also means balance accompanied by the principle of "neither lacking nor exceeding," but at the same time, it is not an attitude of avoiding difficulties or running away from responsibility. Because Islam teaches us to side with the truth in a positive but wise manner (Shihab, 2019) .

Islamic Religious Education Learning

According to Firmansyah, Islamic Religious Education is a process of developing students' potential and harmonizing morals and intellectual abilities so that students can discover their true selves. Motivating students and creating a positive learning environment requires a significant role from educators (Firmansyah, 2019) .

3. Research Methods

This research was conducted at State Junior High School 5 Padangsidempuan City, Perintis Kemerdekaan Street, No. 61, Padang Matinggi, South Padangsidempuan District, Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatra. State Junior High School 6 Padangsidempuan City, Kenanga Street, No. 66, Ujung Padang, South Padangsidempuan District, Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatra. And State Junior High School 8 Padangsidempuan City, Mandailing Street, Km 7.8, Pijorkoling, Southeast Padangsidempuan District, Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatra.

This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach (Sugiyono, 2023). This method was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of how the values of religious moderation are internalized in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and its role in increasing tolerance among students. Case studies were used to examine the phenomenon contextually within specific school environments: SMP Negeri 5 Padangsidempuan, SMP Negeri 6 Padangsidempuan City, and SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan City.

The research data sources are primary and secondary. Primary data are students from SMP Negeri 5 Padangsidempuan City, SMP Negeri 6 Padangsidempuan City, and SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan City, as well as Islamic Religious Education teachers from SMP Negeri 5 Padangsidempuan City, SMP Negeri 6 Padangsidempuan City, and SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan City. While secondary data are: Principal, Deputy Principal, Educators, Teachers of other subjects (Bado, 2021). Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman stages, namely: data reduction, data display, and verification. Furthermore, data validity was verified using the triangulation process (Lexy J Moleong, 2021).

4. Results And Discussion

Integration of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Subjects in Public Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City.

The concept of religious moderation relates to a just, balanced perspective, attitude, and practice of religion that is not excessively right or left. It means that religion adheres to religious rules in the middle, without any excessive traits, such as considering one's religion to be the most correct. In Arabic, moderation comes from the word *wasathiyah*, which in his tafsir (interpretation of the Quran) Ibn Kathir states that *wasathiyah* means fairness. Meanwhile, Al Quraish Shihab states that moderation or *wasathiyah* is a balance that encompasses all worldly and hereafter issues. This must be accompanied by adjustment to the circumstances faced according to religious guidance and the objective circumstances experienced (Shihab, 2019).

Another perspective defines religious moderation as a balanced approach to practicing religious teachings, avoiding extremes or excessive practices. Religious moderation is also reflected in attitudes, perspectives, and practices of diversity that prioritize tolerance, fairness, and mutual respect for differences.

According to the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education textbook for Class VIII of Public Junior High Schools, page 148, we must be moderate. We must maintain a middle ground between worldly and afterlife interests. This refers to the interpretation of QS Al-Baqarah verse 143, which discusses moderation. Moderation means avoiding extreme behavior or expressions. With a moderate attitude, a Muslim will not rely solely on material things and forget God's rights. However, a Muslim will also not be excessive in religious matters, thus detaching themselves from all worldly pleasures. A moderate Muslim will strike a middle ground by balancing both. He will not be extreme in this world or extreme in the afterlife.

Researchers concluded that religious moderation is how a person practices their own religious teachings, without assuming their religion is the most correct or being hostile to other religions. Therefore, we must be able to balance ourselves within our families, schools, and communities, and be able to control ourselves in this life, where we must adhere to the principle that the afterlife is obligatory and the life of this world is equally important. All of this aims to enable us to become perfect human beings who are beneficial to others.

Integration of Religious Moderation Values in Learning Planning This means incorporating the values of religious moderation into all Islamic Religious Education learning materials before the learning process is implemented. This effort is made so that learning does not

only focus on mastering the material but also leads to the development of attitudes and character in students who have a moderate understanding of religion. (Muslimah et al., 2023) .

In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning planning, the integration of religious moderation values can be seen in the formulation of learning objectives, the selection of teaching materials, the determination of methods, and the development of learning activities that contain religious moderation values. Through this PAI learning planning, teachers consciously establish religious moderation values such as tolerance, justice, balance, deliberation, and respect for differences as an important part of the learning process that will take place in the classroom. class.

Integration of Religious Moderation Values in the Implementation of Learning at this stage, the integration of religious moderation values is no longer conceptual, but is realized directly through interactions between teachers and students. Students in the classroom. The implementation of this learning is crucial because the previously planned values are truly implemented and experienced by students in the teaching and learning process. Through this learning process, teachers play a strategic role in instilling moderate, non-extremist religious attitudes and the ability to appreciate differences within the school environment. (Bustamam, 2025) .

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at Padangsidempuan City Public Junior High Schools (SMP Negeri) is implemented using an approach that emphasizes balance between material delivery and attitude development. Teachers focus not only on achieving cognitive goals but also on strengthening character values aligned with the principles of religious moderation. Values such as moderation, tolerance, justice, equality, deliberation, and efforts to maintain harmony are consciously integrated into learning activities, both through methods, interactions, and examples provided by teachers.

Furthermore, the integration of religious moderation values into the learning process is also evident in the way teachers manage the classroom and address differences of opinion among students. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding students toward healthy discussions, respecting others' perspectives, and resolving differences peacefully. Through this familiarization, students not only understand the concept of religious moderation theoretically but also learn to apply it in their daily lives within the school environment.

At a public junior high school in Padangsidempuan City, Islamic Religious Education teachers conduct learning evaluations by considering students' attitudes throughout the learning process. Assessments focus not only on students' ability to answer questions but also on how students behave toward their teachers and peers. Learning evaluations serve as a tool for integrating the values of religious moderation that have been implemented during the planning and implementation stages of learning.

Based on observations made by researchers in the field, it can be concluded that every Islamic Religious Education teacher conducts evaluations in the same way, namely by giving warnings or calling students to talk privately so as not to damage their mental, then the teacher provides an assessment in each lesson both in terms of understanding the material or with the attitudes that students have. Then for additional assessments in the report card, some teachers make quizzes at the end of the lesson, or with games related to the lesson, or there are those with memorization of surahs listed in the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education book, and working on questions at the end of the chapter regarding the material.

The Impact of Integrating Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Subjects on the Tolerance of Students of Public Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City

According to a PAI teacher in Padangsidempuan, students' mindsets in understanding differences are becoming broader, not focused on the idea that if something is different, it is different, and that differences are not a problem. If there are differences of opinion, students don't immediately condemn their friend's opinion, but accept it and consider whether it aligns with what the teacher taught.

Another opinion states that students' thinking is beginning to become more organized. This means that students are beginning to understand that not everyone has to conform to their own desires, whether in terms of habits, opinions, or beliefs. These differences are not meant to be debated, but rather serve as a basis for mutual understanding. Students are then able to distinguish between personal beliefs and how to behave in social situations.

Another perspective explains that the students' mindset has begun to shift positively, no longer criticizing their friends about religion. Every time he enters the classroom, he often

explains that religion teaches balance, not harsh or extreme attitudes. This is what the students are beginning to understand. If there are differences of opinion, a class discussion will be held so that we can find a middle ground between these differences and draw a more logical conclusion .

The attitude of tolerance of students in social interactions after the integration of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning, researchers conducted interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers at Padangsidimpuan City State Middle Schools, which contained information about the behavior and attitudes of students in daily interactions both with friends of different religions and all school residents.

According to the Islamic Religious Education teacher at Padangsidimpuan City Public Middle School, when viewed from everyday friendships, students now demonstrate mutual respect. They are able to listen to and consider their friends' opinions, and are willing to collaborate with friends of different religions, both in learning and in school activities. This demonstrates that students' tolerance is beginning to develop in their daily lives.

Another opinion explains that with religious moderation, students' tolerance levels continue to rise. Students are willing to socialize with anyone regardless of their friends' backgrounds, especially those related to their respective religions. When school events are held, students enthusiastically prepare for them. If differences arise, they hold discussions to find a compromise to prevent conflict.

A PAI teacher at Padangsidimpuan City Public Middle School also expressed his opinion that students have learned to respect their peers regardless of their religion, race, ethnicity, or other beliefs. Students remind each other to respect their peers during religious services, and they participate in activities and help each other in any way they can . The development of empathy and social awareness in students after the implementation of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education. The researcher conducted interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers at a public junior high school in Padangsidimpuan City.

Tolerance is a way for someone to share in the feelings of others. Some argue that the impact of this value of religious moderation on students' tolerance is evident in their attitudes, where students become more sensitive to their peers' conditions . (Irwansyah et al., 2024) . For example, if a friend looks gloomy or sad today, students do not mock or act indifferently towards their friend, but instead approach their friend and ask about their condition. Another opinion is that the development of empathy in students is sometimes quite noticeable. Students are starting to be able to put themselves in the shoes of their peers. For example, when a friend comes from a different background or is experiencing difficulties, they no longer distance themselves but instead try to understand.

Another Islamic Religious Education teacher's perspective is that, based on daily interactions, students are now more concerned with their surroundings. Students have begun to realize that their attitudes can influence the feelings of others. So they are more careful in speaking and acting. Furthermore, students are also more willing to help, such as helping friends who don't understand the lesson, willing to give their friends stationery, accompany friends who are sad, or have thought about helping their friends in the form of material. The character of students, after the integration of the values of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning. Researchers conducted interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers at Public Junior High Schools in Padangsidimpuan City. This interview certainly focused on changes in student character, such as attitudes of responsibility, honesty, discipline, mutual respect, and the ability of students to apply religious values in everyday life.

The students' characteristics have changed, as explained by a PAI teacher at a public junior high school in Padangsidimpuan City. Students are slowly becoming more responsible with their assigned tasks. For example, when given memorization or writing assignments, they are more diligent in completing them. Students are also more polite when speaking to both the teacher and their peers, and when the teacher explains the material, they are more peaceful and calm during the lesson. The integration of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education and Character Education learning has an impact on reducing religious conflicts in the school environment (Mandayu, 2020) .

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion above, the researcher can conclude ; first , the integration of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning has been systematically implemented through the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of learning. In the planning stage, teachers have included character building elements such as tolerance, justice, a moderate attitude, deliberation, balance, and anti-violence in the learning objectives and indicators, although not always written explicitly with the term religious moderation. In the implementation stage, these values are seen in the discussion process, class interactions, and the habituation of mutual respect among students. Meanwhile, in the evaluation stage, teachers not only assess cognitive aspects, but also pay attention to the development of student attitudes and behaviors during the learning process . Second, the integration of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning has a positive impact on increasing students' tolerance attitudes. Changes in students' attitudes after the integration of these religious moderation values are clearly visible , such as students respecting differences of opinion and religion more, being able to solve problems through deliberation, and showing empathy and social concern for others. The school environment also becomes more conducive and harmonious. Thus, Islamic Religious Education learning has a strategic role in shaping the character of students who are moderate and tolerant.

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