



Integration of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Religious Education Materials in Secondary Schools in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the form and strategy of integrating the value of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) materials in secondary schools in Indonesia. Religious moderation is a key concept in building social harmony and preventing the emergence of extreme attitudes among students. Through a qualitative approach with literature study and document analysis methods, this study examines the content of the curriculum, PAI textbooks, and education policies related to strengthening religious moderation. The results of the study show that the values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, justice, balance, and respect for differences, have been conceptually integrated in various PAI materials, especially in the aspects of morality, fiqh, and Islamic cultural history. However, its implementation still faces challenges, including limited teacher understanding, conventional learning methods, and the lack of contextual learning media. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of PAI teachers, develop innovative learning models, and revise the curriculum that is more explicit in containing the value of religious moderation. This research is expected to contribute to the development of PAI that is more inclusive, adaptive, and in accordance with the Islamic vision of rahmatan lil 'alamin.

Keywords: Religious Moderation; Islamic Religious Education; Curriculum Integration; Secondary Schools; Character Education

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic role in shaping the character and personality of students to have faith, piety, and noble character according to Islamic teachings. In the context of increasingly complex social life, PAI not only functions as a transfer of religious knowledge, but also as a medium for internalizing universal human values that encourage the birth of a tolerant, peaceful, and just society. In Indonesia, a country with a high diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and religions, the urgency of religious education with a moderation perspective is becoming more and more real. Religious moderation or *wasathiyyah* is a religious attitude that puts itself in the middle, is not extreme to the right or left, and is able to balance textual understanding with the context of social reality (Azra, 2019). These moderation values must be systematically internalized through education, especially through PAI materials in secondary school which have an important role in the formation of adolescent character.

The phenomenon of increasing religious intolerance and radicalism among the younger generation shows that religious education in schools has not fully succeeded in instilling the values of religious moderation (Nurdin & Hidayat, 2021). Some research results show that some students still understand religious teachings narrowly and exclusively, and even find it difficult to accept differences in religious and social views (Amin, 2020). This condition is a serious challenge for the world of Islamic education in Indonesia. PAI is expected to not only emphasize the cognitive aspect of religion, but also prioritize the affective and social dimension through strengthening the values of moderation. In this context, PAI teachers are required to be agents of change who are able to instill the values of tolerance, justice, balance, and respect for diversity.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has made religious moderation one of the national priority programs in the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN). In the document, it is emphasized that strengthening religious moderation is the key to maintaining social harmony and strengthening the unity of the nation (Kementerian Agama RI, 2020). Through this policy, education is the main sector in realizing substantial religious moderation. Schools as formal educational institutions are expected to be a space for an inclusive, tolerant, and dialogical learning process. Therefore, the integration of the value of religious moderation in the PAI material is a strategic step to ground Islamic values that are *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

The integration of religious moderation values in PAI materials includes efforts to instill universal and balanced Islamic values in every aspect of teachings, both faith, worship, morals, and Islamic cultural history. Values such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), justice (*adl*), balance (*tawazun*), and wisdom (*hikmah*) need to be taught not only as normative concepts, but also in the context of real life (Hidayatullah, 2022). For example, in learning moral beliefs, students can be invited to understand the importance of respecting differences in beliefs without having to sacrifice the principle of faith. In fiqh material, students need to be accustomed to the views of various schools so that they understand that differences are part of Islamic intellectual property. Meanwhile, in the history of Islamic culture, teachers can show how Islam developed peacefully and interacted with various civilizations without losing its Islamic identity.

However, in practice, the implementation of the value of religious moderation in PAI materials still faces a number of obstacles. One of the main challenges is the dominance of doctrinal and textual learning approaches, which focus on memorizing verses, hadiths, and laws, without a deep contextual understanding (Arifin, 2018). As a result, students tend to understand religion rigidly and are less able to apply Islamic values moderately in social life. In addition, the pedagogic and religious competence of PAI teachers also greatly determines the success of the integration of this moderation value. Teachers who have a limited understanding of the concept of religious moderation find it difficult to internalize these values to students effectively (Sutrisno, 2021). Therefore, strengthening the capacity of PAI teachers through training, workshops, and mentoring is very necessary to ensure that the learning process runs according to the goal.

The Merdeka Curriculum, which has been implemented nationally since 2022, actually provides a great opportunity to integrate the value of religious moderation in PAI materials. This curriculum emphasizes project-based learning that is oriented towards strengthening character, Pancasila values, and the ability to think critically and collaboratively (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The values of religious moderation can be implemented through contextual projects that invite students to understand diversity, build social empathy, and foster an attitude of respect for differences. For example, students can undertake interfaith social projects or collaborative activities with other communities to instill the values of tolerance and brotherhood of humanity. This kind of approach is more effective than conventional lecture methods, as it involves hands-on experience and moral reflection.

In the perspective of Islamic education, religious moderation cannot be separated from the concept of *wasathan ummatan* as mentioned in the Qur'an (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 143). Muslims are described as a people who are in the middle, fair, and an example for other humans. This concept is in line with the Islamic vision of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* which emphasizes the balance between the firmness of the faith and social openness. Therefore, Islamic education in Indonesia must be able to internalize these values through humanistic, dialogical, and contextual learning. Education that is oriented towards religious moderation will produce a generation of Muslims who are not only ritually obedient, but also socially moral and contribute positively to the nation and humanity (Nata, 2020).

Several previous studies have shown that education based on religious moderation can improve students' critical thinking skills and reduce the potential for intolerance (Kurniawan, 2021). This emphasizes that the integration of religious moderation values is not only an ideological need, but also a pedagogical need in building an inclusive and peaceful society. In the global context, Islamic educational institutions in various countries have also begun to emphasize the importance of *Islamic moderation* as an approach to dealing with extremism and social conflict (Al-Rashid, 2019). Therefore, Indonesia, as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, has a great responsibility to show a moderate Islamic education model that is relevant to the times.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the integration of the value of religious moderation in PAI materials in secondary school is an urgent need in facing socio-religious challenges in the modern era. PAI must be developed not only to transfer religious knowledge, but also as a means of forming a religious character that is moderate, tolerant, and adaptive to change. This study aims to analyze how the values of religious moderation are integrated in PAI materials, the extent of its implementation in secondary schools, and the factors that influence its success. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to curriculum development, teacher competency improvement, and the formulation of PAI learning strategies that are more contextual and relevant to the spirit of religious moderation in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth the process of integrating religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) materials in secondary schools in Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on understanding social and educational phenomena in a contextual manner and seeks to explore the meaning and experiences of education actors in depth (Creswell, 2018). This approach allows researchers to comprehensively examine how the value of religious moderation is internalized in curriculum, textbooks, and classroom learning practices.

This type of research is a library research that is strengthened by the analysis of curriculum documents and official textbooks. The main data sources include the *Independent Curriculum* and the *2013 Curriculum* on PAI subjects, PAI textbooks used in secondary schools, and the policies of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia related to strengthening religious moderation in education. In addition, supporting data was obtained from scientific journals, academic articles, and research reports relevant to the topics of religious moderation and Islamic education. The selection of sources is carried out purposively based on the relevance, credibility, and up-to-date of information (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data collection techniques are carried out through document analysis and literature review. Document analysis was carried out on the content of the curriculum and textbooks to identify the extent to which religious moderation values, such as tolerance, justice, balance, and respect for differences, were integrated into the learning materials. Meanwhile, a literature review was carried out by examining previous studies on the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic education, both in Indonesia and in other countries. This step aims to strengthen the theoretical foundation and expand the analytical perspective of the phenomenon being studied.

The data analysis process uses content analysis techniques. This technique allows researchers to identify the themes, patterns, and messages contained in the text or document being studied (Krippendorff, 2019). The analysis is carried out through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. At the reduction stage, the data obtained was selected based on relevance to the focus of the research. At the presentation stage, the data was systematically compiled to display the forms of integration of religious moderation values in PAI materials. Furthermore, the researcher draws conclusions about the pattern and strategy of integrating moderation values in the context of curriculum and learning.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source and theoretical triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing various documents and literature from different sources, while theoretical triangulation is carried out using various theoretical perspectives on religious moderation and Islamic education so that the results of the analysis are more valid and objective (Moleong, 2019). In addition, the interpretation of the data was carried out carefully by considering the social, cultural, and educational policy context in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The integration of the value of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) materials is an urgent need in the context of education in a plural and multicultural Indonesia. Religious moderation, which emphasizes balance, tolerance, and justice, is an important concept in facing the socio-religious challenges of the modern era. PAI as one of the compulsory subjects in high school has a strategic role in instilling these values in students. Through PAI learning based on the value of moderation, students are expected not only to understand religious teachings textually, but also to be able to apply them contextually in diverse social lives. Thus, PAI learning is no longer seen as just a means of transferring religious knowledge, but also as a medium for the formation of moderate and civilized character.

The concept of religious moderation promoted by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia contains four main pillars, namely national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of local traditions (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020). These four values can be substantively integrated into various aspects of PAI material, ranging from moral beliefs, fiqh, the Qur'an-Hadith, to the history of Islamic culture. For example, in the material of moral beliefs, teachers can instill an understanding that noble morals include the ability to respect differences, be fair, and avoid excessive fanaticism. In fiqh material, students can be invited to understand differences of opinion among scholars as part of Islamic intellectual property, not as an excuse to mislead each other. Meanwhile, in learning the history of Islamic culture, teachers can show how Islam develops peacefully and dialogues with various cultures in the world, including in the archipelago. This kind of approach shows that the value of moderation is actually inherent in Islamic teachings, but it needs to be recontextualized in the PAI curriculum and learning practices.

The results of the analysis of the PAI curriculum and textbooks show that the value of religious moderation has been conceptually included in various basic competencies and learning outcomes, especially in *the Independent Curriculum*. In the curriculum, PAI is directed to form students who have faith, piety, noble character, and have social concern and national spirit (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The value of religious moderation is reflected in materials that emphasize the balance between human relationships with God, fellow humans, and the environment. However, although textually the value of moderation has been accommodated, its implementation at the learning level is often not optimal. Many teachers still use traditional instructional approaches that emphasize memorization of verses and fiqh laws without relating them to the social realities faced by students (Arifin, 2018). As a result, students tend to understand religion normatively and are less able to develop a moderate understanding of differences.

Another factor that affects the success of the integration of moderation values in PAI is the competence of teachers. PAI teachers play the role of the main agent in transforming the values of moderation to students. Teachers who have broad insights into religious moderation tend to be more creative in packaging dialogical and contextual learning (Sutrisno, 2021). However, some teachers still have limitations in understanding the concept of religious moderation in its entirety, so their teaching tends

to be monotonous and textual. Therefore, training and capacity building of PAI teachers needs to be carried out on an ongoing basis so that they are able to design effective moderation-based learning. The training can include the introduction of the concept of religious moderation, interactive learning methods, and the development of learning media that are relevant to the socio-cultural context of students.

The use of innovative learning models such as *project-based learning* and *problem-based learning* can be an effective strategy in internalizing the values of moderation. This model encourages students to actively engage in activities that foster social empathy and critical thinking skills. For example, students may work on projects that involve interaction with interfaith communities or social activities in the neighborhood. Through this direct experience, the values of tolerance, justice, and respect for differences can be naturally embedded in students (Hidayatullah, 2022). In addition, teachers can use actual case studies that reflect the challenges of religious life in Indonesia to foster moderate awareness among students.

Another obstacle that is often faced in the application of the value of religious moderation in PAI is the limitation of contextual learning media. Most PAI textbooks are still normative and do not reflect the pluralistic social reality. In fact, learning media that displays the diversity of cultures and religious practices in Indonesia can help students understand that Islam is present in various forms of expression that still adhere to universal values. The development of digital media based on local wisdom can also be a solution to strengthen an inclusive and relevant learning process (Kurniawan, 2021). For example, a documentary video about interfaith harmony in Indonesia or an interactive learning app featuring inspiring stories about moderation can be used to enrich students' learning experiences.

From a curriculum perspective, the integration of religious moderation values needs to be strengthened through the preparation of explicit learning outcomes. The value of moderation is not enough only to be mentioned in general in policy documents, but needs to be operationalized in measurable learning indicators. For example, in the basic competencies of morals, it can be included that students' ability to show an attitude of respect for differences and reject violence in the name of religion. Thus, teachers have a clear reference in developing learning activities that are in line with the values of moderation. In addition, collaboration between the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education needs to be improved to ensure that the principle of religious moderation becomes an integral part of the national education system, not just a sectoral program.

The integration of the value of religious moderation in PAI is also closely related to strengthening national character. Religious moderation cannot be separated from the commitment to the ideology of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Through PAI, students need to be taught that being a devout Muslim as well as a good citizen is not contradictory, but rather complementary (Azra, 2019). This understanding is important to avoid the dichotomy between religion and nationality that is often used by intolerant groups. Therefore, religious education in schools must strengthen the value of religious nationalism, namely love for the homeland based on universal and peaceful Islamic values.

From the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the success of the integration of religious moderation values in PAI is highly dependent on three main aspects: curriculum, teachers, and learning environment. The curriculum determines the direction of moderate learning, the teacher is the main actor who implements it, and the learning environment provides space to practice these values in real life. If the three run synergistically, then PAI will play an effective role in forming a generation of Muslims who are moderate, tolerant, and characterful. However, if one of these components is weak, then religious moderation efforts will only stop at the level of discourse without real implementation.

Thus, the integration of the value of religious moderation in PAI materials is not just a curricular agenda, but an ideological and moral effort to maintain the integrity of the nation. A moderate Islamic education will produce a generation that is not only spiritually intelligent, but also socially and emotionally mature. In the global context, Indonesia has the potential to become a model for the implementation of moderate Islamic education that is able to balance between orthodoxy and inclusivity. Therefore, a joint commitment is needed from the government, educational institutions, teachers, and the community to continue to strengthen the values of religious moderation in all dimensions of Islamic education. Through consistent and directed efforts, PAI can become a strategic instrument in realizing a peaceful, just society, and based on Islamic values *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the integration of the value of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in secondary school is a strategic step in forming students who are religious, tolerant, and characterful. In the midst of a pluralistic Indonesian society, PAI has an important role in instilling moderate, balanced, and contextual Islamic values in accordance with the Islamic principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Through internalizing the values of tolerance, justice, balance, and respect for diversity, students are expected to be able to practice Islamic teachings in an inclusive manner without losing their commitment to their beliefs.

This study also found that the values of religious moderation have been accommodated in the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum, but its implementation in the classroom is still not optimal. The main obstacles include the dominance of textual learning approaches and the limited competence of teachers in developing dialogical, contextual, and participatory learning. Therefore, strengthening teacher capacity, implementing innovative learning models such as *project-based learning* and *problem-based learning*, and the use of digital-based learning media and local wisdom are important factors to increase the effectiveness of internalizing the value of religious moderation.

Overall, the success of the integration of religious moderation values in PAI is determined by the synergy between an adaptive curriculum, adequate teacher competence, and a learning environment that supports the creation of a tolerant and inclusive culture. With sustainable policy support and collaboration between the

government, educational institutions, and educators, PAI can function not only as a means of forming students' spirituality, but also as a vehicle for strengthening national character, so as to be able to give birth to a generation of Muslims who have noble morals, love of peace, and are ready to live harmoniously in a diverse society.

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