

Institutionalizing Religious Moderation: School Culture and the Construction of Tolerance in Multicultural Education

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of religious moderation in shaping students' tolerance attitudes at SMPN 1 Mojoagung. The research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving the principal, teachers, and students from different religious backgrounds. The findings reveal that religious moderation has been integrated into the school culture through inclusive educational policies, equal religious learning services, habituation activities, collaborative social programs, and multicultural interaction among students. The implementation of moderation values is reflected in the provision of equal religious educational facilities, daily spiritual activities according to each religion, and social cooperation without discrimination based on religious identity. Teachers and school leaders play significant roles in strengthening tolerance values through role modeling, inclusive communication, and humanistic educational practices. The study also found several challenges, particularly the influence of intolerant narratives on digital media and differences in parental understanding regarding religious diversity. Nevertheless, the multicultural educational environment developed by the school contributes positively to strengthening students' attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and social harmony. This study contributes theoretically to religious moderation studies and practically to the development of multicultural educational strategies in pluralistic school environments.

Abstrak

Kata kunci:
nilai-nilai agama Islam, resiliensi siswa, Pendidikan Agama Islam,

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi nilai-nilai agama Islam dalam menumbuhkan resiliensi siswa di SMP Negeri 3 Jombang. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode studi kasus, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi penerapan nilai-nilai ikhtiar, tawakal, sabar, dan ikhlas dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara terstruktur, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi nilai-nilai agama Islam secara sistematis dan terstruktur meningkatkan resiliensi siswa dalam menghadapi tekanan akademik, masalah keluarga, dan tantangan sosial. Pendekatan keteladanan guru, kegiatan keagamaan rutin, serta penegakan aturan yang konsisten berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap pembentukan karakter dan ketahanan mental siswa. Namun, penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi tantangan seperti keterbatasan sumber daya dan komitmen yang bervariasi di antara pihak terkait. Penelitian ini memperkaya kajian teoritis dalam pendidikan karakter dan resiliensi dengan menegaskan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai agama Islam dalam pendidikan formal dapat membentuk siswa yang lebih tangguh dan berkarakter. Temuan ini memberikan panduan praktis bagi pengembangan kurikulum PAI yang lebih holistik dan aplikatif. Kontribusi utama penelitian ini adalah penyediaan model pembelajaran PAI yang efektif dalam membentuk resiliensi siswa, serta memberikan wawasan baru bagi pengembangan pendidikan karakter berbasis nilai-nilai agama Islam.

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INTRODUCTION.

Indonesia is a multicultural country characterized by extensive diversity in ethnicity, culture, language, and religion. This diversity serves not only as a national asset but also as a challenge in maintaining social harmony (Ainiyah et al., 2025; Ma'arif et al., 2023). In the context of religious life, Indonesia continues to face various issues of intolerance occurring both in society and educational institutions. The emergence of hate speech, discrimination, radicalism, and interreligious conflict indicates that public awareness regarding tolerance and religious moderation still requires continuous strengthening (Azra, 2012). This condition has been intensified by the rapid development of digital media, which enables the widespread dissemination of intolerant ideologies, particularly among younger generations (Keipi et al., 2016). In recent years, the issue of religious moderation has become a major concern of the Indonesian government through various educational and social policies. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia defines religious moderation as a perspective, attitude, and religious practice that emphasizes balance, tolerance, anti-violence, and respect for humanity and national unity (Junaedi, 2019). Religious moderation does not aim to weaken one's religious beliefs; rather, it seeks to promote an inclusive and non-extreme understanding of religion. Yusuf al-Qaradawi explains that the concept of moderation in Islam is known as *wasathiyah*, which refers to a balanced attitude that rejects excessive behavior in religious practices (Al & Chik, 2011). This principle becomes a fundamental basis for building a peaceful and harmonious social life within pluralistic societies.

Education plays a strategic role in instilling the values of religious moderation among students from an early age. Schools function not only as institutions for transferring knowledge but also as spaces for character formation, social values, and the cultivation of tolerance (Hasan, 2021a, 2021b). According to (Arif et al., 2023), multicultural education aims to develop students' awareness in appreciating cultural, religious, and social diversity within democratic societies. In the context of Islamic education, strengthening religious moderation is essential in shaping students who are open-minded, humane, tolerant, and resistant to radicalism (Nurkhasanah et al., 2023). Therefore, the implementation of religious moderation in schools should not be limited to theoretical learning but must also be integrated into school culture, social habituation, and daily interactions among school members. The phenomenon of intolerance in educational environments indicates that strengthening religious moderation remains an urgent necessity. Several studies reveal that students are vulnerable to intolerant ideologies through social environments and digital media exposure. Setara Institute (2022) reported that tendencies toward exclusivism and limited interreligious interaction still exist in several schools in Indonesia (Siddiq et al., 2024). Similarly, research conducted by Jamilah, (2021) found that some students possess a textual understanding of religion and demonstrate limited openness toward differences. These findings indicate that schools bear significant responsibility in developing inclusive and moderate educational cultures.

As formal educational institutions, schools play an essential role in internalizing the values of tolerance through various educational and social activities. Teachers become the primary actors in cultivating students' awareness of religious moderation because they function not only as knowledge transmitters but also as moral role models within students' social lives (Lickona, 2019). The implementation of religious moderation may be carried out through contextual learning, social habituation, interfaith dialogue, collaborative activities, and the reinforcement of school cultures that

appreciate diversity. Thus, religious moderation should not merely be understood as a normative concept but should become a living social practice within students' daily experiences. One of the schools implementing religious moderation values in educational practice is SMPN 1 Mojoagung. This school possesses a multireligious character, with students coming from diverse religious backgrounds. In daily practice, the school strives to develop a culture of tolerance through various educational and social activities. The implementation of religious moderation is reflected in the provision of Christian religious learning facilities (Agris room), morning habituation activities according to each student's religion, the involvement of all students in social activities, and harmonious interfaith interactions within the school environment.

The existence of the Agris room as a learning facility for non-Muslim students demonstrates the school's effort to provide equitable educational services to all students without religious discrimination. In addition, the school promotes an inclusive social culture through mutual cooperation activities, social service programs, national commemorations, and student organizational activities involving all learners regardless of religious identity. These practices indicate that religious moderation is not merely taught theoretically in classrooms but is internalized through school culture and everyday social interactions. Previous studies concerning religious moderation have been widely conducted. Jamilah, (2021) explained that religious moderation is an important approach in preventing radicalism within Islamic educational institutions. Alawi & Maarif, (2021) found that tolerance education contributes significantly to the development of students' inclusive and democratic social character. (Hasan et al., 2023; Hasan & Mujahidin, 2023) emphasized that strengthening religious moderation in schools can foster social harmony within pluralistic communities. However, most previous studies primarily focused on the conceptual aspects of religious moderation, government policy strategies, or implementation within Islamic boarding schools. Research specifically examining the implementation of religious moderation in the daily practices of multireligious public schools and its influence on students' tolerance attitudes remains relatively limited.

Furthermore, previous research tends to position religious moderation solely as part of Islamic Religious Education subjects, whereas the actual implementation of religious moderation involves school culture, social interaction, teacher role modeling, and institutional policies comprehensively. Therefore, a research gap still exists regarding how religious moderation is practiced in everyday school life and how it contributes to shaping students' tolerance attitudes within multicultural educational environments. Based on these conditions, this study offers novelty through its analysis of school-culture-based religious moderation in a multireligious educational environment through social habituation, interfaith educational services, and students' daily interactions in fostering tolerance. This study does not merely examine the conceptual dimensions of religious moderation but also explores its empirical implementation in school life directly. Another novelty lies in its focus on a public school characterized by religious diversity that has successfully developed an inclusive and harmonious social culture. This research is important because religious moderation constitutes one of the fundamental foundations for maintaining national unity within pluralistic societies. Schools, as educational institutions, bear strategic responsibility in shaping students who are tolerant, inclusive, and respectful toward diversity. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of religious moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung, describe the forms of tolerance value internalization within the school environment, and explain its impact on the development of students' tolerance attitudes.

This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of religious moderation studies in education and practically to schools in fostering peaceful, humane, and multicultural educational cultures.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design (Yin, 2018). The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aimed to explore deeply the implementation of religious moderation within the educational environment and its contribution to shaping students' tolerance attitudes at SMPN 1 Mojoagung. According to Creswell, (2016), qualitative research seeks to understand social phenomena through participants' experiences, perspectives, and interactions within their natural settings. Meanwhile, the case study method was utilized because the research focused intensively on a particular educational institution that demonstrates unique practices of religious moderation in a multicultural school environment. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive and contextual findings regarding the forms, processes, and impacts of religious moderation implementation within the school community.

The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Mojoagung, Jombang, East Java, Indonesia. The subjects of this study consisted of the principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, Christian Religious Education teachers, homeroom teachers, and students from different religious backgrounds. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain detailed information regarding school policies, educational practices, and participants' perspectives on religious moderation and tolerance. Participatory observation was carried out by directly observing daily school activities, including morning habituation programs, interfaith interactions among students, classroom learning processes, and social activities within the school environment. Documentation techniques were used to collect supporting data such as school regulations, activity reports, photographs, and institutional documents related to religious moderation programs. To ensure data validity, this research employed source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation, as suggested by Miles et al., (2014).

The data analysis process followed the interactive analysis model developed by Miles et al., (2014b), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were first reduced and categorized according to the research focus, including forms of religious moderation implementation, school culture, interfaith interaction, and students' tolerance attitudes. The organized data were then presented narratively and interpreted critically using theories of religious moderation, multicultural education, and social interaction. Finally, conclusions were drawn continuously throughout the research process by comparing findings from different sources and validating them through triangulation (Emzir, 2014). This analytical process enabled the researcher to produce comprehensive and credible findings concerning the implementation of religious moderation and its role in fostering tolerance among students in multicultural educational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of religious moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung has been systematically integrated into the school's educational culture through inclusive policies, interfaith educational services, social habituation, and multicultural interactions among students. Religious moderation is not merely positioned as theoretical discourse within classroom instruction but has become a practical and living culture reflected in students' daily activities, teacher attitudes, institutional policies, and social relationships within the school environment. The implementation of these values contributes significantly to the development of tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence among students from different religious backgrounds.

Based on interview findings, the principal explained that the school intentionally develops an educational environment that respects diversity as part of its institutional commitment to maintaining social harmony within the school community. According to the principal, the existence of students from different religious backgrounds should become a medium for strengthening tolerance values rather than creating social distance among learners. During the interview, the principal stated:

"The school always emphasizes that religious differences are not barriers to friendship and cooperation. We want students to grow with the awareness that diversity is part of social reality that must be respected together." (Interview with Principal, May 2025)

This statement indicates that the school leadership places religious moderation as part of character education and institutional culture. Observational findings further strengthened this statement. During the observation process, students from different religious backgrounds were seen interacting naturally during classroom learning, break times, extracurricular activities, and school social programs. No discriminatory treatment or exclusive religious grouping was found during the research process. Students demonstrated openness and social closeness regardless of religious identity.

One of the strongest forms of religious moderation implementation found in this study was the provision of equal educational services for all students according to their respective religions. The school provides a special learning room known as the Agris room for Christian Religious Education learning activities. The existence of this facility reflects institutional recognition of minority students' educational rights within the school environment. A Christian Religious Education teacher explained:

"The school gives equal opportunities to Christian students to study according to their beliefs. Facilities are provided properly, and students feel comfortable because they are respected as part of the school community." (Interview with Christian Religious Education Teacher, May 2025)

Documentation data also showed that religious learning activities for non-Muslim students were formally scheduled within the school academic agenda. This finding indicates that religious moderation at the school level is implemented not only symbolically but also structurally through institutional educational policies that guarantee equality and inclusiveness.

In addition, the implementation of religious moderation was also reflected in morning habituation activities conducted before formal learning began. Based on observations, Muslim students routinely performed Qur'anic recitation and collective prayers, while Christian students conducted spiritual reflection activities according to their religious teachings in separate rooms prepared by the school. Although these worship practices differed, all activities were conducted simultaneously within an

atmosphere of mutual respect and discipline. No mocking attitudes, discriminatory behavior, or rejection of different religious practices were found among students.

An Islamic Religious Education teacher explained that habituation activities are intentionally designed to strengthen both religious identity and tolerance awareness simultaneously:

"Students are taught to practice their religion seriously, but at the same time they are also taught to respect friends who worship differently. Religious devotion and tolerance must grow together." (Interview with Islamic Religious Education Teacher, May 2025)

This finding demonstrates that the school does not interpret moderation as weakening religious identity, but rather as strengthening religious commitment alongside respect for diversity. Such practices reflect the concept of *wasathiyah* in Islamic education, which emphasizes balance, justice, and peaceful coexistence in social life.

The findings also reveal that teachers play a central role in shaping students' tolerance attitudes through both formal instruction and daily interaction patterns. Teachers consistently demonstrated inclusive communication, avoided discriminatory language, and encouraged collaborative learning involving students from diverse religious backgrounds. Observational findings showed that students frequently worked together in group assignments, extracurricular activities, and social projects without considering religious differences as social barriers.

A homeroom teacher stated:

"Tolerance is built from daily interaction. Students learn not only from books but also from how teachers behave toward others and how friends interact respectfully despite different beliefs." (Interview with Homeroom Teacher, May 2025)

This statement indicates that the implementation of religious moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung operates through a hidden curriculum process in which values are internalized through social practices and institutional culture rather than solely through theoretical teaching. Teachers function not only as knowledge transmitters but also as social role models, influencing students' attitudes and behaviors.

Observational findings further revealed that social interaction among students was characterized by cooperation, openness, and mutual assistance. During extracurricular activities and school social programs, students from different religious backgrounds actively collaborated without experiencing social segregation. For example, during community service activities and environmental cleaning programs, students worked collectively in mixed groups regardless of religious identity. Such practices contributed to strengthening solidarity and reducing social prejudice among students.

One student explained:

"We study together, play together, and help each other. Religion is never a problem in friendship because teachers always remind us to respect differences." (Interview with Student, May 2025)

The statement illustrates that tolerance values have become internalized naturally within students' daily social experiences. Most students perceived religious diversity positively and considered it part of normal social life within the school environment.

Nevertheless, this study also identified several challenges in implementing religious moderation within the school environment. One significant challenge involved external influences from social media and digital platforms that occasionally expose students to intolerant narratives and exclusive religious perspectives. Several teachers

admitted that some students had accessed online religious content containing hate speech or intolerance toward other religious groups.

An Islamic Religious Education teacher explained:

"Today's students receive a lot of information from social media. Sometimes they encounter extreme or intolerant religious content. Therefore, the school continuously strengthens critical understanding and character education so students can filter information wisely."
(Interview with Islamic Religious Education Teacher, May 2025)

This finding indicates that digital media has become one of the contemporary challenges in strengthening religious moderation among adolescents. The school therefore attempts to balance digital exposure by reinforcing multicultural education, critical literacy, and character-based learning.

Another challenge identified in this study relates to differences in parental understanding regarding religious diversity and tolerance. Several teachers explained that some parents still possess conservative views that indirectly influence students' social attitudes toward peers from different religious backgrounds. Consequently, the school regularly conducts communication and socialization activities involving parents in order to strengthen collective awareness concerning the importance of tolerance and peaceful coexistence within educational environments.

Documentation data further showed that the school formally integrates tolerance values into student development programs, extracurricular activities, and institutional regulations. School documents indicated that multicultural and interfaith activities are included within annual character education programs designed to strengthen social harmony among students. These findings confirm that religious moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung is implemented comprehensively through educational services, institutional culture, social interaction, and school management.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of religious moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung has contributed positively to shaping students' tolerance attitudes within a multicultural educational environment. Religious moderation is implemented not only through curriculum content but also through school culture, teacher role modeling, institutional policy, social habituation, and inclusive interaction patterns among students. The integration of these elements has successfully created an educational environment characterized by tolerance, peaceful coexistence, equality, and respect for diversity.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of the findings, Figure X presents a conceptual model derived from the empirical data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The model illustrates how religious moderation is institutionalized within the multicultural educational environment of SMPN 1 Mojoagung and how this process contributes to the construction of students' tolerance. The figure synthesizes the interrelationships among school culture, teacher practices, multicultural interaction, and institutional sustainability that emerged from the analysis.



Figure 1. Institutionalization of Religious Moderation and the Construction of Students' Tolerance in a Multicultural School Environment

As illustrated in Figure X, the institutionalization of religious moderation begins with the establishment of an inclusive school culture supported by educational policies, equal religious services, accommodation of diverse religious practices, and the integration of tolerance values into school programs. These institutional foundations are reinforced through teacher role modelling, daily habituation activities, and multicultural interactions that enable students from different religious backgrounds to engage in collaborative and respectful relationships. Through these processes, students gradually develop attitudes of tolerance, equality, mutual respect, social harmony, and peaceful coexistence. The model also highlights the influence of contemporary challenges, particularly digital media exposure and differing parental perspectives, which require continuous institutional responses through character education, critical literacy, and stakeholder engagement. Overall, the findings indicate that the dynamic interaction between institutional culture, educational practices, social relationships, and adaptive school governance shapes the sustainability of religious moderation.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of religious moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung has developed into an institutional culture embedded within educational practices, social interaction, and school management. Religious moderation in this context is not merely taught as normative religious discourse but is transformed into practical values internalized through daily activities, inclusive policies, interfaith interaction, and teacher role modeling. This finding confirms that schools possess a strategic role in constructing multicultural awareness and strengthening tolerance among students in pluralistic societies (Setiawan et al., 2024; Shofiyah & Miharja, 2025; Sukardi et al., 2025).

The implementation of equal religious educational services, particularly through the provision of the Agris room for Christian Religious Education, reflects the school's commitment to educational inclusiveness and equality. This finding supports Bennett & Bennett, (2024) theory of multicultural education, which emphasizes that educational institutions should provide equal opportunities and recognition for all students regardless of religious or cultural identity (Azkiya et al., 2024; Masuwd et al., 2025; Munawaroh, 2025; Sechandini et al., 2023). In multicultural educational settings, equality in educational services becomes a crucial foundation for preventing discrimination and social exclusion. The provision of religious learning facilities for minority students indicates that the school has implemented religious moderation not only symbolically but also structurally through institutional policy (Muhalli, 2023; Rosela et al., 2025; Rusmana et al., 2025).

This finding is also consistent with research conducted by Hutagaol et al., (2025), which found that religious moderation in educational institutions becomes effective when supported by an inclusive institutional culture and equal educational treatment. Similarly, Zulfa et al., (2025) explained that tolerance values are more successfully internalized when educational institutions create social environments that recognize diversity as part of collective identity rather than a social threat. Therefore, the implementation of moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung reflects an educational approach that positions diversity as social capital capable of strengthening social harmony among students.

Another important finding concerns the role of habituation activities in strengthening students' tolerance attitudes. Morning spiritual activities according to each student's religion, demonstrate that the school encourages students to practice their religious teachings while simultaneously respecting the worship practices of others. This condition reflects Sya'bani, (2021) concept of *wasathiyah*, which emphasizes balance and justice in religious life. Religious moderation within Islamic educational thought does not aim to reduce religious commitment but rather encourages believers to practice religion peacefully while respecting diversity in society.

The habituation process identified in this study also confirms Lickona, (2012) theory of character education, which states that values are effectively internalized through repetitive practice and social experience rather than theoretical instruction alone. Students at SMPN 1 Mojoagung continuously experience multicultural interaction in daily school activities, allowing tolerance values to develop naturally through lived social experiences. This finding indicates that tolerance education becomes more effective when integrated into school culture and students' daily interaction patterns.

Teacher role modeling emerged as another central factor in strengthening religious moderation within the school environment (Ilham & Ramadani, 2024; Syarifah et al., 2025; Wafa et al., 2024). Teachers consistently demonstrated inclusive communication, non-discriminatory attitudes, and collaborative interaction among students from different religious backgrounds. This finding corresponds with Giroux & Penna, (1979) concept of hidden curriculum, which explains that schools implicitly transmit social values through interaction patterns, institutional culture, and teacher behavior (Orón Semper & Blasco, 2018). In this study, students learned tolerance not only from formal curriculum content but also from observing how teachers respected differences and facilitated harmonious interaction among students.

The importance of teacher role modeling in this study aligns with previous findings by Landsman & Lewis, (2023), who argued that teachers function as social and

moral agents in constructing students' perspectives toward diversity. Teachers who demonstrate democratic and inclusive attitudes significantly influence students' openness toward interreligious interaction. Therefore, religious moderation within educational institutions requires teachers not merely to act as knowledge transmitters but also as facilitators of multicultural social relationships.

Furthermore, collaborative social activities involving students from different religious backgrounds contributed significantly to reducing prejudice and strengthening solidarity among students. Community service programs, environmental campaigns, and extracurricular activities created intensive intergroup interaction that encouraged students to cooperate beyond religious boundaries. This finding strongly supports Oakes, (2003) contact theory, which states that positive social interaction under cooperative conditions can reduce stereotypes and prejudice among different social groups. In the context of this study, continuous interaction among students from diverse religious backgrounds fostered mutual understanding and strengthened collective identity within the school community.

The findings also reveal that students generally perceived religious diversity positively and considered interreligious friendship as a natural aspect of school life. This condition indicates that multicultural educational environments supported by inclusive management contribute significantly to preventing exclusivism and intolerance among adolescents. Such findings strengthen Suryani & Muslim, (2024) argument that educational institutions function as strategic spaces for cultivating moderate religious understanding and strengthening democratic citizenship within plural societies.

However, despite the generally positive findings, this study also identified several challenges in implementing religious moderation. One of the most significant challenges involves exposure to intolerant narratives through social media and digital platforms. Teachers explained that students occasionally accessed online religious content containing hate speech, exclusivist narratives, and radical interpretations of religion. This finding corresponds with Al-Najmi et al., (2026) argument that digital technology has transformed contemporary religious discourse and intensified ideological polarization among young people.

The influence of digital media demonstrates that strengthening religious moderation in contemporary educational contexts requires integration between tolerance education and digital literacy. Students today are highly connected to online information sources that are not always aligned with inclusive educational values. Therefore, schools need to strengthen students' critical literacy skills to enable them to evaluate religious information critically and responsibly. This finding expands previous studies on religious moderation by emphasizing the urgency of digital literacy as part of multicultural education in the digital era.

Another challenge identified in this study concerns differences in parental perspectives regarding diversity and interreligious interaction. Some teachers explained that several parents still possessed conservative understandings that potentially influenced students' attitudes toward peers from different religious backgrounds. This finding supports Garbarino (2017), who explains that children's attitudes are shaped not only by school environments but also by family and broader social systems. Consequently, the success of religious moderation programs at school is closely related to the social and cultural environment surrounding students' lives.

This condition indicates that schools cannot work independently in strengthening tolerance values among students. Collaboration between schools, families, and communities becomes essential in constructing sustainable multicultural awareness.

This finding aligns with Maqhubela, (2022) stakeholder theory, which emphasizes that educational success depends on cooperation among all educational stakeholders, including parents, institutions, teachers, and communities. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation requires participatory communication strategies involving parents in tolerance education and multicultural awareness programs.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the findings of this study demonstrate that religious moderation reflects core Islamic values emphasizing justice, compassion, balance, and peaceful coexistence. The implementation of moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung illustrates that Islamic educational values can coexist harmoniously with multicultural educational principles. This finding supports the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which positions Islam as a source of mercy, peace, and social harmony for all humanity. Thus, religious moderation becomes not merely a socio-political discourse but also a moral and spiritual educational mission.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of religious moderation studies by demonstrating that moderation is most effective when implemented comprehensively through institutional policy, teacher role modeling, school culture, habituation activities, and inclusive social interaction. Previous studies largely focused on conceptual or policy-oriented discussions of moderation, whereas this study highlights the practical dynamics of moderation within everyday school life. The findings indicate that religious moderation is not formed instantly through classroom instruction but develops gradually through continuous social experience within multicultural educational environments.

Practically, this study implies that schools should strengthen multicultural educational strategies through inclusive policies, equal educational services, collaborative social programs, digital literacy education, and character-based learning. Schools should also intensify communication with parents and communities to ensure that tolerance values taught at school are reinforced within broader social environments. Without support from families and communities, the implementation of religious moderation in schools may face significant obstacles.

Overall, this study confirms that religious moderation can be effectively strengthened through educational cultures emphasizing equality, cooperation, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. The implementation of moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung demonstrates that multicultural educational environments supported by inclusive school management can successfully foster tolerant, democratic, and socially responsible students capable of maintaining harmony within pluralistic societies.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the implementation of religious moderation at SMPN 1 Mojoagung has been effectively integrated into the school's educational culture through inclusive policies, equal religious educational services, habituation programs, teacher role modeling, and multicultural social interaction among students. Religious moderation is not merely positioned as theoretical knowledge within classroom learning but is internalized through daily educational practices that emphasize tolerance, mutual respect, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence among students from different religious backgrounds. The provision of equal religious learning facilities, collaborative school activities, and inclusive interaction patterns demonstrates that the school has successfully created a multicultural educational environment that supports the development of students' tolerance attitudes and strengthens social harmony within the school community.

The findings further reveal that teachers, school leadership, and institutional culture play central roles in strengthening religious moderation within educational settings. Teachers function not only as knowledge transmitters but also as moral and social role models who cultivate inclusive attitudes through everyday interaction and educational practices. In addition, collaborative social activities and interfaith interaction among students contribute significantly to reducing prejudice and strengthening solidarity among learners. Nevertheless, this study also identified several challenges, particularly the influence of intolerant narratives circulating through digital media, differences in parental understanding regarding religious diversity, and the persistence of conservative social perspectives outside the school environment. These conditions indicate that strengthening religious moderation requires continuous collaboration among schools, families, and wider communities in order to maintain tolerance values sustainably.

This study contributes theoretically to the development of religious moderation studies by demonstrating that moderation is most effectively implemented through the integration of institutional policy, school culture, social habituation, and inclusive social interaction within educational environments. Practically, the findings provide important implications for schools in developing multicultural educational strategies, strengthening digital literacy programs, and fostering inclusive communication between schools and parents. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single educational institution and a specific sociocultural context, which may limit the generalization of findings to other educational environments. Therefore, future studies are recommended to explore comparative models of religious moderation implementation across different schools, educational levels, and sociocultural settings in order to enrich the discourse on multicultural education and tolerance development in pluralistic societies.

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