

RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE AND TOLERANT LEARNING PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Religious moderation has become an important concern in Islamic education amid increasing religious diversity, social polarization, and the rapid expansion of digital religious discourse. This study aims to examine how religious moderation can be translated into inclusive and tolerant learning practices in Islamic education and to develop a conceptual framework that connects moderation values with students' everyday educational experiences. This study employed a qualitative systematic literature review with a conceptual synthesis approach. Relevant scholarly literature published primarily between 2020 and 2026 was identified through academic databases using keywords related to religious moderation, Islamic education, inclusive education, religious tolerance, dialogical learning, and religious diversity. The selected literature was analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns related to curriculum, pedagogy, teacher roles, institutional culture, and digital engagement. The synthesis identified five interconnected dimensions: religious moderation values, curriculum integration, inclusive and dialogical pedagogy, teacher role modeling, and institutional culture supported by critical digital engagement. The findings further indicate that moderation develops through a progression from knowledge and reflection to interaction, internalization, and practice. Based on this synthesis, the study proposes a conceptual framework: Religious Moderation Values → Inclusive Curriculum → Dialogical Pedagogy → Tolerant Interaction → Internalization of Moderate Attitudes. The framework emphasizes that religious moderation should not be treated merely as additional curriculum content but as an integrated pedagogical process involving curriculum, classroom interaction, teacher behavior, institutional culture, and students' engagement with digital religious information. The study contributes a conceptual basis for developing Islamic education that maintains

religious commitment while fostering tolerance, empathy, fairness, openness, and constructive engagement with diversity.

Keywords: *religious moderation; Islamic education; inclusive education; religious tolerance; dialogical pedagogy.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Religious diversity is an important characteristic of contemporary societies and creates both opportunities and challenges for education. In multicultural contexts such as Indonesia, schools and Islamic educational institutions bring together learners with different religious, cultural, social, and intellectual backgrounds. Education therefore has a strategic role in developing learners who are able to maintain their religious identity while respecting differences and participating constructively in pluralistic environments. Within Islamic education, this role is particularly significant because religious learning is closely associated with the formation of values, attitudes, character, and social behavior. Recent studies indicate that religious education can contribute to tolerance and social cohesion when moderation is embedded in curriculum and learning practices rather than treated only as a theoretical concept (Nasri et al., 2024; Putra & Fauzi, 2024).

Religious moderation has consequently become an important framework for developing balanced, inclusive, and tolerant religious understanding. In the Islamic educational context, moderation can be associated with principles such as *tawassuth* (moderation), *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice and proportionality), and *tasamuh* (tolerance). These principles encourage learners to understand religious teachings while avoiding excessive or exclusive attitudes toward others. Recent literature emphasizes that religious moderation should be understood not simply as an abstract religious concept but as a set of values that can influence students' interactions, attitudes toward diversity, and participation in society (Fathunnajih et al., 2025; Zulfa et al., 2025).

The educational relevance of religious moderation has become increasingly important in the context of digital transformation. Digital platforms have expanded young people's access to religious information and created new opportunities for learning and communication. At the same time, digital environments can expose learners to polarized narratives, misinformation, intolerance, and exclusive interpretations of religion. Recent research on inclusive Islamic Religious Education highlights the need to strengthen students' capacity to critically engage with religious information and differences in the digital era (Septiana & Misbah, 2026). This suggests that contemporary Islamic education needs to develop not only religious knowledge but also dialogue, critical thinking, empathy, digital literacy, and responsible engagement with diverse perspectives.

Recent empirical studies further demonstrate that religious moderation can be incorporated into Islamic education through curriculum, classroom practices, and institutional culture. Zulfa et al. (2025), for example, show that Islamic schools in Indonesia have implemented religious moderation through educational activities designed to develop students' understanding and practice of moderation in everyday life. Similarly, Fasyiransyah et al. (2025) found that Islamic Religious Education approaches based on religious moderation can support students' tolerance and encourage more inclusive learning environments.

However, the integration of religious moderation remains uneven. A recent literature review found that values such as *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, *i'tidal*, and *muwathonah* are present in Islamic Religious Education curricula, but their representation and implementation may remain implicit and inconsistent across educational institutions. The same study highlights the importance of teachers, hidden curriculum, and institutional support in determining whether moderation values are actually internalized by learners (Fathunnajih et al., 2025). Research at the university level likewise indicates that although students may demonstrate generally positive attitudes toward religious moderation, institutional conditions and educator competence remain important factors in strengthening these attitudes (Helmawati et al., 2024).

The pedagogical dimension is therefore particularly important. Religious moderation cannot be effectively developed merely by adding a specific topic about tolerance to the curriculum. It needs to be reflected in how teachers select learning materials, facilitate classroom discussions, respond to differences of opinion, and create opportunities for students to interact with diverse perspectives. Recent research identifies contextual, collaborative, dialogue-based, and value-based learning as relevant approaches for integrating moderation and tolerance into Islamic Religious Education (Putra & Fauzi, 2024). Studies of *aqidah* and *akhlak* learning also demonstrate that Islamic values can be connected with moderation through teacher guidance, curriculum, and school environment (Isti'anah et al., 2024).

Furthermore, inclusive learning requires consistency between classroom instruction and institutional culture. Religious moderation becomes more meaningful when students experience respect, fairness, dialogue, and inclusion not only as learning content but also as everyday practices within the educational environment. Recent research emphasizes that curriculum, school culture, and

institutional policies need to work together to strengthen tolerance and inclusive attitudes among students (Nur 'Azah & Sholeh, 2025; Azizah et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of research, an important gap remains between the normative discourse of religious moderation and its practical pedagogical implementation. Much of the existing literature explains the importance of moderation, tolerance, and inclusion, while comparatively less attention is given to how these principles can be systematically translated into classroom practices that involve dialogue, critical reflection, collaborative learning, and respectful engagement with differences. This gap is particularly important because the internalization of moderation depends not only on what students learn but also on how they experience learning and interaction.

Therefore, this study examines Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: Developing Inclusive and Tolerant Learning Practices. It aims to synthesize recent scholarship on religious moderation and identify pedagogical practices that can strengthen inclusion, tolerance, dialogue, and respect for diversity in Islamic education. The study argues that religious moderation should be embedded across curriculum, teaching methods, classroom interaction, learning materials, assessment, and institutional culture. Through this integrated approach, Islamic education can contribute to the development of learners who possess a strong religious identity while demonstrating openness, fairness, empathy, respect for diversity, and responsible participation in a pluralistic society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious moderation in Islamic education is generally understood as an approach that promotes balanced religious understanding while maintaining commitment to religious principles and respecting social, cultural, and religious diversity. In the Indonesian context, moderation is commonly associated with values such as *tawassuth* (moderation), *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *muwathanah* (national commitment). Recent literature emphasizes that these values should not remain normative concepts but need to be internalized through educational processes that shape students' attitudes and everyday behavior (Fathunnajih et al., 2025; Prasetyo et al., 2025). A systematic review by Musyahid and Kolis (2024) similarly demonstrates that religious moderation in Islamic education is increasingly associated with curriculum integration, teacher development, and the creation of inclusive educational environments.

Within Islamic education, religious moderation is closely connected with the development of tolerance and respect for diversity. Tolerance does not necessarily require students to abandon their religious identity; rather, it involves recognizing the rights of others to hold different beliefs and perspectives while maintaining one's own religious commitments. Recent studies indicate that the internalization of moderation values requires a combination of formal learning, extracurricular activities, school culture, and inclusive religious practices (Anhar et al., 2025). This suggests that religious moderation should be approached as a multidimensional educational process involving knowledge, attitudes, interpersonal interaction, and social behavior rather than merely as a curricular topic.

Curriculum plays an important role in institutionalizing these values. Fathunnajih et al. (2025) found that values such as *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, *i'tidal*, and *muwathanah* are increasingly incorporated into Islamic Religious Education curricula, particularly through learning objectives and teacher practices. However, their representation remains implicit and uneven across educational institutions, indicating that curriculum integration alone does not guarantee effective internalization. The literature therefore points to the importance of aligning curriculum content with learning methods, teacher behavior, institutional policies, and the hidden curriculum.

The pedagogical dimension is consequently central to religious moderation. Recent research suggests that dialogical, participatory, collaborative, contextual, and reflective learning can provide students with opportunities to encounter differences and develop respectful forms of interaction. Such approaches shift Islamic education from a predominantly knowledge-transmission model toward a learning process in which students discuss, question, reflect, and engage with different perspectives. A recent systematic review of religious moderation-based Islamic Religious Education identifies curriculum integration, dialogical and participatory learning, teacher role modeling, and supportive educational environments as recurring strategies for developing tolerant character (A'zizah, 2025).

Teachers occupy a particularly important position in this process because students learn moderation not only from instructional materials but also from the ways teachers respond to disagreement and diversity. Teachers can function as role models by demonstrating fairness, openness, respectful communication, and balanced religious interpretation. Recent systematic literature also identifies teacher competence and exemplary conduct as significant factors influencing the

effectiveness of moderation-based Islamic education (Prasetyo et al., 2025). This indicates that professional development should include not only mastery of religious content but also pedagogical competence in facilitating dialogue, managing disagreement, and creating inclusive classroom interactions.

The concept of inclusive learning further expands the meaning of religious moderation. Inclusive Islamic education seeks to create learning environments in which students can participate without experiencing exclusion based on religious interpretation, cultural background, social identity, or differences of opinion. Recent research on Islamic schools in Indonesia indicates that moderation values can be implemented through both academic activities and students' everyday experiences, demonstrating the importance of connecting classroom learning with institutional culture (Zulfa et al., 2025). Thus, inclusion should operate at multiple levels, including curriculum, classroom interaction, school culture, extracurricular activities, and institutional policies.

The institutional dimension is particularly relevant in Islamic boarding schools and other Islamic educational institutions. Recent reviews indicate that curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional policies interact in shaping religious moderation among students. Educational institutions can reinforce moderation through collective activities, social interaction, organizational practices, and rules that encourage respect for differences and peaceful coexistence (Mustofa et al., 2026). Consequently, religious moderation should not be understood exclusively as an individual student characteristic but also as an institutional culture that is continuously reproduced through educational practices.

Another important dimension is the relationship between religious moderation and the digital environment. Students increasingly encounter religious ideas through social media and digital platforms, where diverse interpretations coexist with misinformation, polarization, and potentially intolerant narratives. Recent studies emphasize the need for Islamic education to strengthen students' critical engagement with religious information and develop their capacity to navigate socio-digital diversity responsibly. A recent systematic review identifies socio-digital dynamics as one of the challenges affecting the implementation of religious moderation through Islamic Religious Education, alongside institutional support and differences in religious understanding (Islahuddin et al., 2026).

The literature also indicates that religious moderation should be understood as a process of value internalization rather than simply value transmission.

Students need opportunities to move from understanding moderation concepts toward developing attitudes and practicing them in social interactions. This process can be represented as knowledge → reflection → interaction → internalization → practice. Such a perspective is consistent with recent systematic reviews showing that structured learning programs, inclusive activities, school environments, and opportunities for social engagement contribute to the internalization of moderation values (Anhar et al., 2025).

Despite the growing literature, a significant gap remains between the conceptual formulation of religious moderation and its pedagogical operationalization. Many studies have established the importance of curriculum integration, tolerance, teacher modeling, and institutional support, but fewer studies integrate these elements into a coherent framework of inclusive and tolerant learning practices. Recent systematic research similarly identifies a persistent gap between the normative ideal of *wasatiyyah* and its operationalization in actual pedagogical practice (Saputra et al., 2026).

Based on this literature, religious moderation in Islamic education can therefore be conceptualized as an integrated educational process involving moderate religious values, inclusive curriculum, dialogical pedagogy, teacher role modeling, supportive institutional culture, and critical engagement with diversity. These components interact to develop learners who are able to maintain religious commitment while demonstrating tolerance, empathy, fairness, openness, and respect toward others. The present study builds on this conceptual foundation by focusing specifically on how religious moderation can be translated into practical learning processes that make Islamic education more inclusive and tolerant.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative systematic literature review with a conceptual synthesis approach to examine how religious moderation can be translated into inclusive and tolerant learning practices in Islamic education. Relevant literature was identified through academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and relevant journal databases, using keywords such as “religious moderation,” “Islamic education,” “Islamic Religious Education,” “inclusive education,” “religious tolerance,” “moderate Islam,” “dialogical learning,” and “religious diversity.”

The review primarily focused on scholarly publications from 2020 to 2026, while earlier foundational sources were included when necessary to establish key

theoretical concepts. Literature was selected based on its relevance to religious moderation, Islamic education, inclusive pedagogy, tolerance, curriculum, teacher roles, and educational culture. Studies that lacked a clear connection to the research focus or did not provide sufficient scholarly information were excluded.

The selected literature was analyzed thematically by identifying recurring concepts, educational strategies, pedagogical practices, and institutional factors associated with religious moderation. The analysis focused on five interconnected dimensions: (1) moderation values, (2) curriculum integration, (3) inclusive and dialogical pedagogy, (4) teacher role modeling, and (5) institutional culture and digital engagement. Findings from the selected studies were compared and synthesized to identify common patterns, implementation challenges, and gaps in existing research.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The thematic synthesis of the selected literature identified five interconnected dimensions through which religious moderation can be translated into inclusive and tolerant learning practices in Islamic education: moderation values, curriculum integration, inclusive and dialogical pedagogy, teacher role modeling, and institutional culture with critical digital engagement. Rather than functioning as separate components, these dimensions form a pedagogical continuum through which religious moderation can move from conceptual understanding toward everyday educational practice.

The first dimension concerns the integration of religious moderation values into Islamic education. The literature consistently associates moderation with balanced religious understanding, respect for diversity, fairness, and rejection of both excessive and exclusionary religious attitudes. Concepts such as *tawassuth* (middle way), *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *muwathanah* (commitment to social and civic life) provide an ethical foundation for developing learners who maintain their religious identity while recognizing the legitimacy of differences. The synthesis indicates that moderation is more effectively developed when these values are connected to students' everyday social experiences rather than presented only as abstract religious concepts. Thus, religious moderation is positioned not merely as knowledge about

religious diversity but as an orientation that influences attitudes, communication, and social interaction.

The second dimension is curriculum integration. The reviewed studies show that religious moderation can be incorporated into Islamic education through learning objectives, teaching materials, classroom activities, assessment, and the selection of contextual issues. Moderation-related content can be connected to topics such as akidah, akhlak, fiqh, Qur'anic studies, Islamic history, and contemporary social issues. However, the literature also indicates that the presence of moderation-related content in curriculum documents does not automatically guarantee moderate learning practices. Effective implementation requires consistency between formal curriculum, instructional strategies, teacher behavior, and the broader educational environment. Consequently, curriculum integration needs to move beyond the addition of specific topics toward the development of learning experiences that continuously expose students to principles of fairness, respect, dialogue, and responsible engagement with differences.

The third dimension concerns inclusive and dialogical pedagogy. The synthesis demonstrates that classroom practices based on discussion, collaborative learning, contextual problem solving, reflection, and respectful dialogue provide important mechanisms for developing tolerance and openness. Dialogical learning enables students to encounter different interpretations and perspectives while learning to articulate their own views responsibly. In this context, disagreement becomes part of the learning process rather than a basis for exclusion. Inclusive pedagogy also requires teachers to create classroom environments in which students can express questions and opinions without fear of humiliation or discrimination. Such practices encourage students to develop not only cognitive understanding of religious moderation but also interpersonal capacities such as empathy, listening, perspective-taking, and respectful disagreement.

The fourth dimension is teacher role modeling and professional capacity. The literature indicates that teachers occupy a central position in translating moderation values into students' lived educational experiences. Teachers communicate moderation not only through instructional content but also through their language, responses to disagreement, treatment of students, and approaches to religious differences. Fair and non-discriminatory classroom management,

balanced explanations of contested issues, and openness to diverse perspectives can function as forms of implicit learning. Conversely, inconsistent teacher behavior may weaken the effectiveness of formally designed moderation curricula. The synthesis therefore positions teacher competence as involving both pedagogical knowledge and the capacity to model respectful, balanced, and inclusive religious behavior.

The fifth dimension combines institutional culture and critical digital engagement. Religious moderation is strengthened when schools, madrasahs, Islamic educational institutions, and pesantren establish institutional norms that support respect, dialogue, cooperation, and non-discrimination. Policies, extracurricular activities, interpersonal relationships, and institutional responses to differences contribute to what students experience as the hidden curriculum of moderation. At the same time, the digital environment has become an increasingly important context for religious learning. Students encounter diverse religious interpretations through social media and online platforms, including educational resources as well as misinformation, intolerance, polarization, and exclusive narratives. The findings therefore indicate that religious moderation in contemporary Islamic education requires critical digital engagement, enabling students to evaluate religious information, recognize potentially divisive narratives, and participate responsibly in digital spaces.

Across these five dimensions, the synthesis reveals a progression from knowledge to reflection, interaction, internalization, and practice. Religious moderation begins with students' understanding of balanced and inclusive religious values, but its educational significance emerges when these values are discussed, experienced through interaction, internalized through reflection, and expressed in everyday behavior. Based on this pattern, the study develops a conceptual framework in which Religious Moderation Values → Inclusive Curriculum → Dialogical Pedagogy → Tolerant Interaction → Internalization of Moderate Attitudes. The framework emphasizes that inclusive and tolerant learning practices are not produced by curriculum content alone; they emerge through the interaction of curriculum, pedagogy, teacher modeling, institutional culture, and students' engagement with diverse social and digital environments.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that religious moderation in Islamic education should be understood as a multidimensional pedagogical process rather than merely as the transmission of moderate religious knowledge. The synthesis identifies five interconnected dimensions: the internalization of religious moderation values, curriculum integration, inclusive and dialogical pedagogy, teacher role modeling, and institutional culture supported by critical digital engagement. This finding is consistent with recent systematic and narrative reviews which show that the effectiveness of religious moderation in Islamic education depends on the interaction between policy, curriculum, pedagogy, teachers, and the broader educational ecosystem (Jamaluddin, 2024; Prasetyo et al., 2025). Prasetyo et al. (2025), for example, emphasize the need to move religious moderation from the level of policy discourse toward concrete pedagogical practices, while Jamaluddin (2024) identifies curriculum reform, teacher development, and interfaith dialogue as interconnected components of moderation-oriented Islamic education.

The first finding concerns the importance of religious moderation values as the normative foundation of Islamic education. The literature indicates that moderation involves more than avoiding extreme positions; it encompasses balanced religious understanding, justice, tolerance, respect for diversity, and responsible participation in social life. In the Indonesian context, these orientations are commonly represented through values such as *tawassuth*, *tawazun*, *i'tidal*, *tasamuh*, and *muwathanah*. Setiawan and Maryam (2024) demonstrate that the integration of moderation values into Islamic education curricula is intended to strengthen social harmony and reduce exclusionary tendencies, while Faizol et al. (2024) show that curriculum integration can connect Islamic Religious Education with students' capacity to respect differences while maintaining their religious principles. These findings reinforce the present study's argument that religious moderation should be positioned as an ethical orientation that shapes how students understand and respond to difference.

However, the findings also indicate that the presence of moderation values in educational documents does not automatically result in moderate attitudes. This distinction is important because values can remain declarative when students are only asked to memorize concepts such as tolerance, balance, or

respect. Nur 'Azah and Sholeh (2025) argue that curriculum integration becomes more meaningful when moderation principles are embedded in learning objectives, content, student-centered pedagogy, dialogue, and institutional policies. Similarly, Pujiianti et al. (2025) emphasize that a responsive Islamic Education curriculum needs to address real social issues and develop students' social capacities rather than focus exclusively on normative religious knowledge. Thus, the present synthesis extends previous discussions by emphasizing the transformation of moderation values from declared principles into lived educational experiences.

The second finding concerns curriculum integration. The literature demonstrates that religious moderation can be incorporated across Islamic Religious Education rather than being restricted to a particular lesson or additional curriculum unit. Moderation can be embedded in learning objectives, subject matter, instructional activities, assessment, and contextual learning experiences. Faizol et al. (2024) found that moderation at the madrasah level can be integrated through themes connecting different areas of Islamic Religious Education, while Nur 'Azah and Sholeh (2025) identify curriculum objectives, content, student-centered approaches, and institutional policies as important dimensions of curriculum development for tolerance and inclusivity. More recent scholarship further suggests that curriculum development needs to respond to contemporary challenges, particularly digital transformation, misinformation, and changing patterns of religious engagement (Dewayanie & Tentiasih, 2026; Kholifah, 2026).

This finding also highlights a potential gap between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum. A curriculum may formally include moderation but provide insufficient opportunities for students to discuss controversial issues, encounter diverse perspectives, or practice respectful disagreement. The systematic review by Prasetyo et al. (2025) is particularly relevant in this regard because it frames religious moderation as a process requiring alignment between policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional conditions. Therefore, curriculum integration should not be measured only by the existence of moderation-related competencies or learning materials. It should also be examined through the quality of classroom experiences generated by the curriculum. This distinction strengthens the present study's conceptualization of curriculum as a bridge between religious values and pedagogical practice.

The third finding emphasizes the role of inclusive and dialogical pedagogy. The synthesis suggests that students are more likely to internalize moderation when they are provided with opportunities to discuss differences, articulate arguments, listen to alternative perspectives, collaborate with peers, and reflect on social and religious issues. This corresponds with Nur 'Azah and Sholeh's (2025) argument that student-centered approaches, dialogue, and critical thinking should accompany the integration of moderation into curriculum design. Similarly, recent work on Islamic education and religious moderation increasingly positions learning processes, rather than content alone, as the mechanism through which tolerance and inclusivity can be developed (Prasetyo et al., 2025; Pujianti et al., 2025).

Dialogical pedagogy is particularly relevant because religious diversity inevitably produces differences in interpretation and understanding. A classroom that treats disagreement as inherently problematic may unintentionally reproduce exclusionary attitudes, whereas a classroom that provides structured opportunities for respectful disagreement can transform difference into an educational resource. The purpose of dialogue, therefore, is not to eliminate religious conviction or relativize all beliefs, but to develop students' capacity to distinguish between religious commitment and exclusionary behavior. This distinction is important for Islamic education because an inclusive approach does not necessarily require students to weaken their religious identity. Instead, it encourages them to develop a confident religious identity alongside empathy, respect, and the ability to coexist with difference.

The fourth finding relates to teacher role modeling. Teachers occupy a strategic position because students experience moderation not only through textbooks and formal instruction but also through everyday classroom interactions. Teachers demonstrate moderation through their language, treatment of students, responses to disagreement, selection of learning materials, management of controversial discussions, and willingness to recognize different perspectives. Tasikmalaya et al. (2024) demonstrate the importance of Islamic Religious Education teachers in strengthening moderation through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Likewise, Muslih et al. (2024), in their comparative study of Indonesia and Malaysia, show that teachers play an important role in understanding and disseminating religious moderation in primary education.

These findings support the present study's position that teacher behavior constitutes an important form of the hidden curriculum of religious moderation.

The significance of teacher modeling is also related to teacher competence. Knowledge of religious moderation alone may be insufficient if teachers lack the pedagogical skills needed to facilitate dialogue or manage disagreement constructively. Teachers need to be able to present contested religious issues carefully, avoid discriminatory language, provide balanced opportunities for participation, and guide students toward evidence-based and respectful discussion. Recent studies examining teachers' implementation of moderation similarly identify teacher understanding, institutional support, and appropriate learning activities as important conditions for successful implementation (Faizol et al., 2024; Tasikmalaya et al., 2024). The implication is that teacher professional development should combine religious literacy, pedagogical competence, intercultural competence, and digital literacy rather than treating moderation as an additional theoretical topic.

The fifth finding concerns institutional culture. Religious moderation cannot be sustained when classroom messages contradict the practices of the educational institution. Students learn from school policies, leadership practices, extracurricular activities, peer interactions, disciplinary systems, and patterns of social participation. Nur 'Azah and Sholeh (2025) identify institutional policies promoting inclusivity and equality as an important component of moderation-oriented curriculum development, while Prasetyo et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of the institutional ecosystem in translating moderation policy into educational practice. This suggests that moderation should operate simultaneously at the classroom and institutional levels. A school or madrasah cannot effectively teach tolerance if institutional practices marginalize certain groups, discourage constructive disagreement, or provide limited opportunities for students to interact across differences.

The institutional dimension is particularly significant in Islamic boarding schools and other residential educational environments because students experience religious education continuously beyond formal classroom hours. Recent research on boarding schools indicates that institutional environments can become important spaces for mainstreaming religious moderation through both formal learning and digital literacy initiatives (Qomaruzzaman et al., 2026). This finding strengthens the argument that moderation should be understood as an

educational culture, not simply a classroom strategy. The consistency between curriculum, teacher behavior, institutional leadership, peer relationships, and extracurricular activities can provide repeated reinforcement of moderate and inclusive attitudes.

The digital environment introduces an additional layer to this institutional and pedagogical process. Students increasingly encounter religious information through YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp, and other digital platforms. Al-Ulya et al. (2025) found that these platforms have become important sources of religious knowledge for madrasah students, while verification practices remain limited and critical reflection can still be shallow. This finding is important because digital exposure means that Islamic education no longer has complete control over the religious information encountered by learners. Students may receive competing interpretations from teachers, religious authorities, influencers, peers, algorithms, and online communities.

Consequently, digital religious literacy should be integrated into religious moderation education. Students need to learn not only how to access religious information but also how to evaluate its source, context, evidence, purpose, and potential social consequences. Nurcahyadi et al. (2026) argue that religious moderation can provide a foundation for reconstructing Islamic education in response to digitalization, particularly in relation to intolerance, identity polarization, and religious digital literacy. Dewayanie and Tentiasih (2026) similarly propose integrating religious moderation and digital literacy into Islamic Religious Education curricula in response to post-truth conditions. Recent empirical work also shows that digital strategies such as thematic videos, interactive quizzes, digital projects, and digital religious literacy activities can be incorporated into Islamic Education to strengthen moderation values. Therefore, digital literacy should not be treated as a separate technological competency but as part of students' contemporary capacity to practice religious moderation.

An important implication of these findings is that religious moderation develops through a process of internalization rather than simple knowledge acquisition. The literature synthesized in this study suggests a progression from understanding religious values, reflecting on differences, participating in interaction, developing attitudes, and eventually expressing those attitudes through behavior. This explains why students may demonstrate conceptual

knowledge of tolerance while still experiencing difficulties when confronted with actual disagreement. The transition from knowledge to practice requires repeated opportunities for social interaction and reflection, supported by teachers and reinforced by institutional culture. In this sense, moderation is simultaneously cognitive, affective, social, and behavioral.

Based on this synthesis, the proposed framework extends existing discussions in two ways. First, it positions curriculum and pedagogy as connected rather than independent mechanisms. Curriculum establishes what values and competencies should be developed, whereas pedagogy determines how those values are encountered and experienced. Second, it places tolerant interaction between pedagogy and internalization, emphasizing that students need opportunities to practice moderation in social situations before moderate attitudes can become stable orientations. This is consistent with recent literature calling for a shift from policy-level commitment toward concrete pedagogical implementation (Prasetyo et al., 2025).

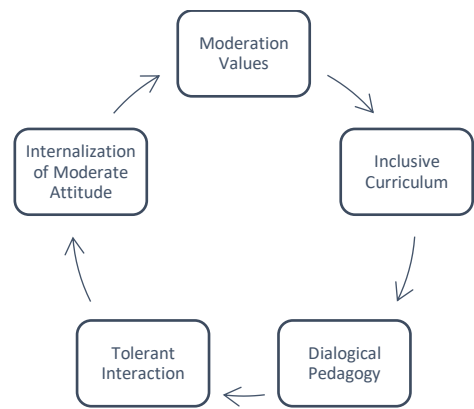
The framework also demonstrates that religious identity and inclusivity should not be treated as mutually exclusive educational objectives. Islamic education can maintain students' commitment to Islamic teachings while simultaneously developing respect for different beliefs, interpretations, cultures, and social identities. The objective is therefore not to eliminate religious difference but to cultivate the capacity to live constructively within difference. This orientation is particularly relevant in multicultural societies such as Indonesia, where religious education operates within diverse social, cultural, and ideological contexts. The integration of moderation values, inclusive curriculum, dialogical pedagogy, teacher modeling, institutional culture, and digital literacy provides a more comprehensive pathway for addressing these conditions.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that religious moderation becomes educationally meaningful when it is embedded, enacted, modeled, experienced, and reinforced. Curriculum provides the normative direction; pedagogy creates opportunities for dialogue and reflection; teachers model the values; institutional culture reinforces them; and digital literacy enables students to navigate contemporary religious information critically. The contribution of the present study therefore lies in conceptualizing religious moderation as an integrated pedagogical ecosystem rather than as an additional curriculum theme. This perspective provides a basis for future empirical research to examine how the

interaction among curriculum, pedagogy, teacher competence, institutional culture, and digital literacy influences students' tolerance, empathy, openness, and capacity for constructive engagement with religious diversity.

This study concludes that religious moderation in Islamic education should be understood as an integrated pedagogical process rather than merely as the delivery of moderate religious concepts through the curriculum. The systematic synthesis identified five interconnected dimensions that support the development of inclusive and tolerant learning practices: religious moderation values, curriculum integration, inclusive and dialogical pedagogy, teacher role modeling, and institutional culture supported by critical digital engagement. These dimensions indicate that moderation becomes meaningful when religious values are translated into learning experiences, social interactions, and institutional practices.

The study further proposes a conceptual pathway :



This framework emphasizes that curriculum provides the normative foundation, while pedagogy creates opportunities for students to experience and practice moderation. Teacher behavior and institutional culture subsequently reinforce these values, while digital literacy enables students to critically navigate diverse religious information and potentially polarizing online environments. Accordingly, religious moderation should be embedded across the formal curriculum, classroom interaction, teacher professional development, institutional policies, extracurricular activities, and digital learning practices.

The findings also demonstrate that religious identity and inclusivity are not necessarily contradictory educational objectives. Islamic education can

strengthen students' religious commitment while simultaneously developing tolerance, empathy, fairness, openness, and respect for differences. The central challenge is therefore not whether religious moderation should be taught, but how it can be consistently embedded, enacted, modeled, experienced, and internalized within the educational ecosystem.

For educational practice, Islamic schools, madrasahs, pesantren, and higher education institutions should strengthen moderation-oriented curriculum design, expand dialogical and collaborative learning, develop teachers' pedagogical and digital competencies, and establish institutional cultures that consistently promote non-discrimination and respectful engagement with diversity. Future research should empirically examine the proposed framework across different educational contexts and investigate how curriculum, pedagogy, teacher competence, institutional culture, and digital literacy interact in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors toward religious diversity.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study conceptualizes religious moderation in Islamic education as an integrated pedagogical ecosystem comprising value internalization, curriculum integration, inclusive pedagogy, teacher role modeling, institutional culture, and critical digital engagement. These interconnected dimensions enable students to strengthen their religious identity while developing tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity. The proposed framework emphasizes that moderation must be embedded, practiced, and reinforced throughout the educational environment.

Islamic educational institutions should integrate moderation values into curricula, classroom activities, teacher development, institutional policies, and digital literacy programs. Teachers should facilitate inclusive dialogue and model respectful engagement with differences. Future research should empirically examine the proposed framework across diverse educational settings and investigate its relationship with students' attitudes and behaviors toward religious diversity.

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