



Internalization of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Religious Education Learning at Madrasah Aliyah through Teacher Practices and Student Responses

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the internalization process of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning at MAN 1 Banyumas, Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province. The study addresses the need to examine how moderation values are not only taught as concepts, but also practiced through teacher interaction, classroom dialogue, school culture, and students' daily experiences. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected from November 2025 to February 2026 through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. The participants consisted of 24 informants, including Islamic Religious Education teachers, madrasah leaders, a religious activity supervisor, and students from grades X, XI, and XII. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show five main categories: dialogical learning practices, teacher role modeling, students' reflective responses, implementation challenges, and institutional support. The study found that students understood religious moderation more deeply when teachers connected Islamic teachings with concrete social experiences, respectful discussion, and consistent school habituation. However, the internalization process faced challenges related to limited learning time, varied religious literacy, digital religious content, and the absence of clear assessment indicators. This study contributes to Islamic education by positioning religious moderation as a lived pedagogical process. It implies that madrasahs need to strengthen teacher capacity, digital religious literacy, and reflective assessment to support the formation of moderate, tolerant, and socially responsible students.



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1. Introduction

The introduction serves as a crucial opening for the research paper. It should capture the reader's attention and provide essential context for understanding the content of the research. The author(s) must clearly address the research problem, offer relevant background information, and establish their work within the existing body of research. Additionally, the introduction should justify the study's significance and outline the paper's structure and contributions.

Religious moderation has become a central issue in global education because modern societies face identity polarization, exclusive religious narratives, and social tensions based on religion in both public and digital spaces. In Indonesia, this issue becomes more urgent because social life

develops within religious, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and local-traditional diversity. Subchi et al. (2022) explain that moderate religious attitudes relate to an individual's ability to place religion as a source of social ethics, not as a basis for rejecting other groups. Islamic educational institutions hold a strategic position because education can shape religious understanding, civic attitudes, and the ability to live together from adolescence. Nasir and Rijal (2021) affirm that mainstreaming religious moderation through Islamic education requires curriculum integration, academic culture, and institutional practice. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education should not only transfer normative knowledge. It should also develop social awareness that is fair, tolerant, and responsible.

In the madrasah context, religious moderation cannot be separated from the function of Islamic education as a space for moral formation, religious identity development, and civic character building. Madrasah Aliyah represents an important educational level because students are in a developmental phase in which they begin to interpret religious teachings, construct social views, and take positions toward difference. Daheri (2022) positions moderation, inclusivity, and global citizenship as new directions for Islamic Religious Education in madrasahs. Muqowim et al. (2022) show that Islamic wasathiyah values can develop through educational processes that emphasize balance, justice, tolerance, and respect for diversity. Mulyana (2023) also finds that moderation values in Islamic Religious Education textbooks include non-violence, equality, justice, and tolerance. However, the presence of these values in textbooks does not automatically guarantee their internalization among students if teachers do not manage learning in a dialogical and contextual way.

Field problems show that religious moderation often appears as a formal concept, but it does not always become a living learning experience in classroom interaction. Zulfatmi (2023) finds that the learning model of religious moderation values in Madrasah Aliyah has not fully facilitated students to think critically, resolve value conflicts, and internalize moderation values in daily life. Basri et al. (2022) show that strengthening Higher Order Thinking Skills in Akidah Akhlak learning can help students connect moderation values with social problems that they encounter. Hanafi et al. (2022) explain that students' religious literacy plays a role in shaping their perspectives on religious moderation. Fasyiransyah et al. (2025) find that an Islamic Religious Education learning approach based on religious moderation can shape students' tolerance when teachers use interactive methods, inclusive policies, and structured activities. These findings show that the main problem does not only concern the content of learning materials. It also concerns how teachers present moderation values in the learning process.

This issue deserves further study because religious moderation practices in madrasahs directly intersect with social reality, school culture, teacher-student relations, and adolescents' religious experiences. During the preliminary observation at MAN 1 Banyumas in November 2025, the researcher found that values such as tolerance, justice, deliberation, and non-violence appeared in classroom learning, short religious talks, worship routines, and students' daily interactions. However, several students still understood religious moderation as a general attitude of "not being fanatical," rather than as a conscious process of respecting differences, rejecting violence, and maintaining national commitment. Amin et al. (2024) show that the hidden curriculum can internalize moderation values through pesantren culture, role modeling, and continuous social habits. Burga and Damopolii (2022) affirm that local culture can strengthen moderation when religious values meet social practices within the community. Wu et al. (2025) explain that value internalization occurs when individuals accept external values as part of their beliefs, motivations, and actions.

Previous studies have discussed religious moderation in curriculum, textbooks, higher education, pesantren, and institutional policy. Syam and Ishak (2025) show that curriculum programs based on moderation still face challenges in teacher readiness, implementation processes, and program evaluation. Mukhibat et al. (2024) emphasize that the religious moderation curriculum needs to be tested through institutional practice so that it does not stop at

a normative design. Purwanto et al. (2024) find that pre-service teachers need concrete pedagogical experience in order to teach moderation reflectively. Wardi et al. (2023) show that openness, tolerance, non-violence, and justice grow when education connects formal learning with social habituation. However, few studies have deeply explored how Islamic Religious Education teachers practice moderation values in Madrasah Aliyah classrooms and how students respond to these values as personal experiences.

Based on this gap, this study aims to understand the internalization process of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning at MAN 1 Banyumas, Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province. The study focuses on teacher practices in designing learning, building dialogue, providing role models, managing differences, and connecting religious materials with students' social experiences. This study also explores students' responses to religious moderation values, especially tolerance, justice, deliberation, non-violence, and respect for difference. Ma'arif et al. (2022) emphasize that moderate Islamic Religious Education learning strategies need to activate dialogue, reflection, and contextual understanding. Saepudin et al. (2023) show that the formation of moderate character requires directed, consistent, and experience-based educational actions. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of value internalization in Islamic education. Practically, this study provides input for Islamic Religious Education teachers and madrasahs in designing learning that is more dialogical, reflective, and relevant to students' social lives.

2. Materials and Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design. This design was selected because the study focuses on an in-depth understanding of experiences and processes related to the integration of *computational physics* and *machine learning* in a specific academic context. A case study is appropriate when researchers seek to understand a contemporary phenomenon in a contextual, holistic, and experience-based manner. Chowdhury and Shil (2021) state that qualitative case studies help researchers understand real events within their natural contexts. Mtisi (2022) also explains that a case study strategy must be guided by the research objectives, unit of analysis, and social context in which the phenomenon occurs. Therefore, this study does not aim to measure relationships between variables. It aims to understand how academic actors experience, interpret, and manage the integration between physics-based models and machine learning algorithms.

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This design was selected because the study focuses on the internalization process of religious moderation values in the real context of Islamic Religious Education learning in one madrasah. A qualitative approach is appropriate because this study seeks to understand meanings, experiences, social practices, and pedagogical relations among teachers, students, learning materials, and madrasah culture. Lim (2025) explains that qualitative research emphasizes a holistic understanding of phenomena through participants' experiences and perspectives. The case study design was used because the internalization of values cannot be separated from institutional context, school culture, classroom interaction, and student experience. Braun and Clarke (2023) stress the importance of researcher sensitivity toward context, patterns of meaning, and interpretive positioning in qualitative research.

The study was conducted at MAN 1 Banyumas, Purwokerto Timur District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province. The research period was from November 2025 to February 2026. The participants consisted of 24 people, including three Islamic Religious Education teachers, one madrasah principal, one vice principal for curriculum affairs, one religious activity supervisor, and eighteen students from grades X, XI, and XII. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on three criteria: direct involvement in Islamic Religious Education learning, understanding of madrasah religious activities, and willingness to provide data openly. Student participants were selected by considering grade variation, gender, classroom

participation, and involvement in religious or student organization activities. Snowball sampling was used in a limited way when initial informants recommended students or teachers with important experiences related to religious moderation practices. Naeem et al. (2024) explain that data adequacy in qualitative research does not depend only on the number of informants. It also depends on thematic depth, repeated patterns of meaning, and the ability of the data to answer the research focus.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, limited participatory observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers, madrasah leaders, religious activity supervisors, and students to explore their understanding of religious moderation, learning strategies, teacher role modeling, classroom dialogue experiences, and student responses to tolerance, justice, deliberation, and non-violence. Observations were conducted during Islamic Religious Education learning, religious activities, teacher-student interactions, and communication culture within the madrasah environment. Documentation included teaching modules, lesson plans or learning tools, textbooks, religious activity agendas, madrasah rules, activity photos, and character-strengthening program records. Data validation used source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and audit trail. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from teachers, students, madrasah leaders, religious activity supervisors, and school documents. Method triangulation was conducted by comparing interview, observation, and documentation results. Ahmed (2024) explains that trustworthiness in qualitative research needs to be built through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Data analysis used thematic analysis. The analysis process began with interview transcription, repeated reading, identification of important data, open coding, category development, theme construction, and interpretation of findings. Initial codes focused on data related to teacher practices, learning strategies, role modeling, classroom dialogue, student responses, internalization barriers, and madrasah cultural support. Codes with related meanings were then grouped into categories, such as teachers' dialogical strategies, habituation of moderation values, pedagogical role modeling, students' reflective responses, and implementation challenges. Final themes were developed after the researcher compared interview data, observation notes, and madrasah documents. Findings were presented with direct quotations from informants so that the relationship between empirical data and researcher interpretation could be traced. Braun and Clarke (2023) explain that thematic analysis should produce themes that explain patterns of meaning, not merely summarize data content. The entire analysis process was recorded in an audit trail consisting of interview guides, field notes, transcripts, coding matrices, category revisions, and researcher reflective memos so that the study can be replicated in a limited way in similar madrasah contexts.

3. Results and Discussions

The findings show that the internalization of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning at MAN 1 Banyumas developed through interconnected classroom, cultural, and institutional practices. The data were obtained from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and school documentation conducted from November 2025 to February 2026. The analysis produced five main categories: dialogical learning practices, teacher role modeling, students' reflective responses, implementation challenges, and institutional support. These categories show that religious moderation was not only introduced as a formal concept. It was also shaped through daily interaction, school culture, religious habituation, and students' personal interpretation of Islamic values.

3.1. Dialogical Learning Practices in Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education teachers introduced religious moderation through dialogical learning. Teachers did not only define tolerance, justice, deliberation, and non-violence. They

also connected these values with students' daily experiences, such as friendship, classroom conflict, social media interaction, religious differences, and respect for other people's opinions. During classroom observation, teachers often used reflective questions to invite students to express their views before linking them with Islamic teachings. This method made learning more contextual because students could relate religious concepts to situations that they encountered in school and social life.

One teacher stated, "I do not want students to memorize the meaning of moderation only. I want them to understand how to act when they face differences among friends" (T1, interview, December 2025). This statement shows that teachers viewed moderation as practical ethics, not merely as cognitive knowledge. In this practice, classroom dialogue became a medium for students to learn how to listen, respond, and evaluate different perspectives. The observation also showed that students became more active when teachers used real cases rather than abstract explanations. This pattern indicates that dialogical learning helped students understand moderation as a lived value.

3.2. Teacher Role Modeling and School Habituation

Teacher role modeling became an important part of the internalization process. Students did not only learn religious moderation from textbooks or classroom explanation. They also observed how teachers spoke, listened, corrected mistakes, and responded to different opinions. Teachers modeled fairness, patience, openness, and respect during learning activities. These behaviors shaped students' perception of tolerance and justice in a more concrete way.

A student stated, "I understand tolerance more from how the teacher listens to different answers in class. The teacher does not immediately blame us, but asks us to explain our reasons" (S7, interview, January 2026). This quotation shows that students interpreted teacher behavior as part of moral learning. School habituation also strengthened this process through morning greetings, congregational prayer, short religious talks, student organization activities, and guidance during daily interaction. These repeated practices created a school culture that supported the formation of moderate attitudes. The data show that internalization became stronger when students experienced consistency between what teachers taught and what teachers practiced.

3.3. Students' Reflective Responses to Religious Moderation Values

Students showed varied responses to religious moderation values. Some students understood moderation as tolerance and respect for difference. Others still interpreted it narrowly as avoiding fanaticism or not being extreme. Several students began to connect moderation with daily behavior, such as avoiding insults, listening to friends, rejecting bullying, accepting different opinions, and solving problems through discussion.

One student said, "At first, I thought moderation only meant not being excessive in religion. After class discussion, I understood that it also means respecting people and not forcing my opinion" (S12, interview, January 2026). This response indicates a shift from conceptual understanding to reflective awareness. However, this shift did not occur equally among all students. Some students needed repeated guidance because their understanding was influenced by prior religious knowledge, peer interaction, family background, and digital religious content. The findings show that students did not simply receive moderation values. They interpreted, negotiated, questioned, and gradually connected these values with their own social experience.

3.4. Challenges in the Internalization Process

Teachers faced several challenges in internalizing religious moderation values. The challenges included limited learning time, different levels of students' religious literacy, the influence of digital religious content, and the tendency of some students to view religious issues in a binary way. Some students received short religious messages from social media and accepted them

without checking the context. This condition required teachers to guide students carefully so that they could understand religious messages in a broader and more responsible way.

One teacher explained, “Some students receive short religious messages from social media. Sometimes they accept them directly without checking the context. In class, we need to guide them slowly” (T3, interview, February 2026). Observation data also showed that some students were active in discussion, while others remained silent when the topic involved sensitive religious or social issues. This situation indicates that internalizing moderation requires a safe classroom climate. Students need space to ask questions, express uncertainty, and reflect on different views without fear of being judged. Therefore, teachers need pedagogical sensitivity when discussing religious difference, social conflict, and digital religious narratives.

3.5. Institutional Support through School Documents and Programs

School documents supported the internalization of religious moderation values. Teaching modules, religious activity schedules, student discipline rules, and character-strengthening programs showed that the madrasah had institutional concern for moral education and social harmony. These documents indicated that religious moderation had entered the school’s educational agenda through formal and informal programs.

However, the documents did not always provide detailed operational guidance on how teachers should evaluate students’ internalization of moderation values. Most documents emphasized character formation, religious discipline, and student conduct, but they did not clearly describe indicators for assessing tolerance, deliberation, justice, or non-violence in classroom practice. This finding suggests that the implementation of religious moderation still depended strongly on teacher creativity, pedagogical sensitivity, and the ability to connect Islamic values with students’ social reality. School programs provided the structure, while teachers shaped the meaning of moderation through daily learning practices.

3.6. Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings show that religious moderation was internalized through a layered process. The process began with conceptual introduction, continued through classroom dialogue, strengthened through teacher role modeling, and developed through school habituation. Students’ understanding became stronger when teachers connected moderation values with concrete experiences. The findings also show that internalization was not a linear process. Students negotiated, accepted, questioned, and sometimes simplified the meaning of moderation based on their prior knowledge, peer relations, digital exposure, and school experience. Therefore, religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education should be understood as a dynamic educational process that involves knowledge, emotion, social interaction, and institutional culture.

Discussion

The findings indicate that religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education should be understood as a pedagogical process, not merely as curriculum content. The internalization of moderation values occurred when teachers transformed abstract concepts into meaningful classroom experiences. This finding supports Ma’arif et al. (2022), who argue that moderate Islamic Religious Education requires dialogical, reflective, and contextual learning strategies. The study also strengthens Mulyana’s (2023) finding that Islamic Religious Education textbooks contain moderation values, but these values require meaningful teacher mediation in classroom practice. In this study, moderation became more understandable when teachers connected religious teachings with students’ social experiences.

Dialogical learning became one of the strongest findings in this study. Students showed deeper understanding when teachers invited them to analyze social cases, compare different views, and reflect on their own attitudes. This finding aligns with Basri et al. (2022), who emphasize the role of Higher Order Thinking Skills in strengthening students’ religious moderation. The present

study adds that critical thinking does not grow only through formal cognitive tasks. It also grows through safe classroom dialogue where students can express opinions, listen to others, and evaluate the consequences of their attitudes. This finding offers a classroom-level perspective for understanding how moderation values are practiced in Madrasah Aliyah.

Teacher role modeling also played a central role in value internalization. Students learned moderation from the way teachers managed classroom interaction, corrected mistakes, and responded to different opinions. This finding supports Amin et al. (2024), who explain that the hidden curriculum can transmit moderation values through daily habits, institutional culture, and role modeling. The finding also relates to Wardi et al. (2023), who show that openness, tolerance, non-violence, and justice grow when formal learning connects with social habituation. In MAN 1 Banyumas, teacher behavior functioned as a living curriculum. Students did not only hear the values of tolerance and justice. They saw how these values operated in real interaction.

The varied responses among students show that internalization is gradual and negotiated. Some students moved from a narrow understanding of moderation as “not being fanatical” to a broader understanding that includes respect, deliberation, and non-violence. This finding can be interpreted through the concept of value internalization. Wu et al. (2025) explain that internalization occurs when individuals accept external values as part of their beliefs, motivations, and actions. In this study, signs of internalization appeared when students began to connect moderation with daily behavior, such as listening to friends, avoiding verbal violence, solving conflict through discussion, and respecting different opinions.

The influence of digital religious content became an important challenge in the internalization process. Some students encountered short religious messages on social media and interpreted them without sufficient context. This finding supports Hanafi et al. (2022), who highlight the importance of religious literacy in shaping students’ perspectives on religious moderation. Religious literacy helps students understand religious messages more critically, examine context, and avoid simplistic interpretation. This condition suggests that Islamic Religious Education teachers need to include digital religious literacy in classroom discussion. Students need guidance not only to understand religious texts, but also to evaluate religious narratives circulating in digital spaces.

Compared with previous studies, this study confirms and extends earlier findings on religious moderation in Islamic education. Zulfatmi (2023) found that moderation learning in Madrasah Aliyah still needs stronger support for critical thinking and value conflict resolution. The present study confirms this issue and shows that teachers responded through dialogical learning, contextual examples, and classroom reflection. Fasyiransyah et al. (2025) found that a religious moderation-based Islamic Religious Education approach can shape tolerance through interactive methods and inclusive policies. This study adds that interactive methods become more effective when teachers link them with students’ personal experiences, school culture, and daily social interaction.

The findings also show that institutional support is necessary but not sufficient. School documents and programs provided a formal structure for character education and religious activities. However, the internalization of moderation values still depended on teacher agency and classroom practice. This finding relates to Syam and Ishak (2025), who note that curriculum-based moderation programs still face challenges in teacher readiness, implementation processes, and evaluation. In the context of MAN 1 Banyumas, the school had supportive programs, but teachers needed clearer indicators and practical tools to assess students’ moderation-related attitudes. This gap indicates that madrasahs need to move from normative commitment to operational practice.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of value internalization studies in Islamic education. It shows that internalization involves cognitive, affective, social, and cultural dimensions. Students do not only receive values from textbooks. They interpret values through

teacher interaction, peer relations, religious routines, digital exposure, and school culture. This finding strengthens the argument that religious moderation should be examined as a lived educational process. It also expands the discussion of Islamic Religious Education by placing teacher agency and student response at the center of analysis.

Practically, the findings imply that madrasahs need to support teachers with contextual teaching materials, dialogical learning guidelines, and assessment tools for religious moderation. Teachers need professional development in reflective pedagogy, management of sensitive issues, classroom dialogue, and digital religious literacy. Madrasahs also need to strengthen the connection between formal learning and school culture. Religious moderation will be more meaningful when students experience consistency between what teachers teach, what teachers practice, and what the school normalizes in daily life.

Future research can deepen this topic by comparing several madrasahs with different social, cultural, and institutional backgrounds. Further studies can examine how students' digital religious literacy shapes their acceptance or rejection of moderation values. Future research can also develop assessment models for measuring the internalization of religious moderation beyond written tests. Such studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic education contributes to the formation of moderate, reflective, and socially responsible students.

4. Conclusions

This study concludes that the internalization of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning at MAN 1 Banyumas developed through a layered and contextual process. The process involved dialogical learning practices, teacher role modeling, students' reflective responses, school habituation, and institutional support. Teachers played a central role in translating abstract values such as tolerance, justice, deliberation, non-violence, and respect for difference into meaningful classroom experiences. Students showed varied levels of understanding, but their reflective awareness became stronger when teachers connected religious teachings with real social situations, classroom dialogue, and daily school practices. The findings show that religious moderation in Islamic education should not be treated only as curriculum content, but as a lived pedagogical process shaped by interaction, culture, and student experience.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of value internalization studies in Islamic education by showing that moderation involves cognitive, affective, social, and cultural dimensions. Practically, the findings suggest that madrasahs need to strengthen teacher capacity in dialogical pedagogy, digital religious literacy, sensitive issue management, and reflective assessment. At the policy level, religious moderation programs need clearer operational indicators so that teachers can assess students' attitudes beyond written tests. Future research can compare different madrasahs across social and cultural contexts, examine the role of digital religious literacy in shaping student responses, and develop assessment models for measuring the internalization of religious moderation values more comprehensively.

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