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# Internalization of Religious Moderation Values through Islamic Religious Education Learning

#### Imam Jafa Shodiq

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri

Correspodence Email/WA: imamjs1989@gmail.com

Abstract: This study explores the internalization of religious moderation values through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan. The research is motivated by the urgent need to strengthen tolerance, balance, and inclusivity among students in facing religious diversity and sociocultural plurality. Employing a qualitative approach with interviews, observations, and documentation, the study aims to understand how moderation values are conveyed, practiced, and sustained in the school environment. The findings reveal that teachers play a central role not only as educators but also as role models who demonstrate moderate attitudes in daily interactions. The school culture, including routine activities, policies, and symbolic practices, reinforces these values systematically. Furthermore, collaboration with families and communities strengthens the continuity of moderation practices beyond the classroom setting. Despite challenges such as family diversity, digital media influences, and limited resources, adaptive strategies have been implemented, including curriculum integration, experiential learning, parental involvement, and digital literacy awareness. The study concludes that the internalization of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education is a dynamic and continuous process that requires synergy among teachers, schools, families, and communities. This research contributes to the academic discourse by highlighting practical models of moderation education in Islamic schools and emphasizes the importance of holistic, contextual, and participatory approaches in shaping students who are tolerant, balanced, and morally responsible in a plural society.

**Keywords:** religious moderation, Islamic Religious Education, internalization

#### INTRODUCTION

Education has always been considered a powerful medium for shaping the intellectual, social, and spiritual aspects of individuals(Shaleha, 2025). In the context of religious education, it plays a vital role in instilling values that not only strengthen personal faith but also promote harmony in society(Damayanti et al., 2025). The idea of religious moderation is becoming increasingly important in today's globalized world, where pluralism, diversity, and differences are inevitable realities. Religious moderation emphasizes tolerance, balance, and the avoidance of extremism, which are crucial for maintaining peace and coexistence among diverse communities. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) serves as an effective platform for embedding these values



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because it combines religious knowledge with ethical and social responsibilities (Safana & others, 2024). Through proper internalization of moderation values, students are guided to practice their religion faithfully while respecting the rights and beliefs of others.

In Indonesia, a country known for its cultural and religious diversity, the concept of religious moderation has become a national priority(Suryadilaga et al., 2020). The Ministry of Religious Affairs promotes religious moderation as a key framework to counter radicalism and intolerance among young generations(Yani et al., 2024). Schools and madrasahs, as formal institutions of education, are tasked with integrating these values into their curricula, particularly through Islamic Religious Education(Moslimany et al., 2024). IRE not only strengthens students' understanding of Islamic principles but also teaches them to uphold values such as justice, respect, and tolerance(Nurhidin, 2023). This approach ensures that students are equipped with the moral and intellectual capacity to face societal challenges without falling into exclusivism or radical thought. Hence, the internalization of moderation values in IRE learning contributes to the creation of a peaceful and inclusive society.

For students, especially in the formative stages of education, internalizing religious moderation values is essential in shaping their worldview and daily interactions. The influence of digital media and peer environments often exposes them to polarized perspectives and radical ideas that can threaten harmony(Dharma & Seneru, 2025). By embedding moderation values through IRE, students are prepared to critically evaluate diverse opinions, avoid extremism, and engage constructively with others. Such an education fosters not only cognitive understanding but also emotional and social maturity. It allows young people to practice their religion with conviction while embracing diversity as a source of strength rather than conflict(Isyraqi et al., 2025). Therefore, schools have a critical role in nurturing a generation that is both religiously committed and socially inclusive.

Despite the strong emphasis on religious moderation in educational discourse, its practical implementation remains challenging. Many teachers struggle to translate abstract concepts such as tolerance, balance, and inclusivity into engaging classroom practices. Lessons often remain theoretical, focusing more on rote learning of religious doctrines rather than experiential activities that cultivate moderation in behavior. As a result, students may understand the definition of



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moderation but fail to embody it in daily life. Additionally, limited training and resources for teachers hinder the effective incorporation of moderation values into lesson planning and pedagogical strategies. This gap creates inconsistency between the goals of the curriculum and the realities of classroom practice.

Another challenge lies in external influences that compete with the values taught in schools. Social media platforms, for example, often expose students to polarizing narratives and intolerant ideologies that undermine efforts to build moderation. Furthermore, societal issues such as sectarianism, prejudice, and local conflicts may negatively shape students' perceptions of diversity. The disparity between the inclusive ideals promoted in schools and the exclusivist messages encountered outside can create confusion and inconsistency in students' moral development. Without proper reinforcement, the values of religious moderation taught in IRE risk becoming superficial and ineffective. This highlights the urgent need for innovative, contextual, and holistic approaches to strengthen the internalization process.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of integrating religious moderation into Islamic Religious Education as a means of promoting peace and social harmony. Scholars argue that teaching moderation fosters resilience against radical ideologies and equips students with critical thinking skills to engage constructively with diversity. Research also suggests that effective moderation education involves participatory learning methods such as discussions, simulations, and collaborative projects. These approaches encourage students to internalize values through active engagement rather than passive memorization. Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the role of teachers as role models, whose attitudes and behaviors significantly influence students' adoption of moderation values.

Other research findings underline the importance of contextualizing religious moderation in line with local cultural realities. For instance, integrating local wisdom, intercultural dialogues, and community-based programs has been shown to strengthen students' appreciation of diversity. Digital platforms have also been identified as both a challenge and an opportunity in promoting moderation. When used effectively, technology can serve as a tool for disseminating positive messages of inclusivity and tolerance. These studies affirm that religious moderation is not only a



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pedagogical matter but also a broader socio-cultural endeavor requiring collaboration between schools, families, and communities.

Although many studies discuss the importance of religious moderation, few provide a detailed analysis of how its values are practically internalized within the framework of Islamic Religious Education. Much of the existing literature focuses on theoretical models or policy frameworks without offering in-depth insights into classroom-level practices. Moreover, limited attention has been given to the challenges of integrating moderation values amidst digital disruptions and pluralistic social environments. The novelty of this research lies in exploring practical strategies, challenges, and innovations in internalizing religious moderation through IRE learning. By focusing on implementation at the grassroots level, this study bridges the gap between theory and practice.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the internalization of religious moderation values through Islamic Religious Education learning. Specifically, the research seeks to identify effective strategies used by teachers, the challenges encountered in implementation, and the ways students respond to these values in their daily lives. The study also aims to propose innovative and contextual approaches to strengthen the process of internalizing moderation values in schools. Ultimately, this research aspires to contribute to the development of Islamic Religious Education that not only enhances students' knowledge but also nurtures inclusive, tolerant, and balanced individuals.

#### **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the internalization of religious moderation values through Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan(Sugiyono, 2016). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the processes, meanings, and practices embedded in the daily experiences of teachers and students. Rather than focusing on numerical data, this study emphasized narratives, observations, and direct experiences, making it well-suited to uncover the strategies and challenges of integrating religious moderation into teaching and learning.

The research was conducted at MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan, a madrasah that reflects both traditional Islamic values and the challenges of contemporary society. The participants consisted



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of three groups: (1) Islamic Religious Education teachers, who are directly involved in delivering moderation values, (2) students, who are the recipients of these values, and (3) school administrators, who provide institutional support. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, ensuring that only those with relevant experiences and responsibilities were included in the study.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: Observation: Researchers observed classroom activities, extracurricular programs, and school culture to identify practices of value internalization(Morgan, 2022). Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, administrators, and selected students to explore their perspectives and experiences. Documentation: School documents, lesson plans, and policy guidelines were analyzed to complement observations and interviews. This combination of methods enabled triangulation, ensuring richer and more reliable data.

The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which involves three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification(Huberman & others, 2019). Data reduction was conducted by selecting and coding relevant information, data display was performed through thematic categorization, and conclusions were drawn based on emerging patterns. This systematic approach allowed the researcher to identify both strategies and challenges in internalizing moderation values at the school.

To ensure credibility, the research employed triangulation of methods (observation, interview, documentation) and sources (teachers, students, administrators). Member checking was conducted by asking participants to review the findings, ensuring that interpretations reflected their actual perspectives. Transferability was enhanced by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, while dependability and confirmability were ensured through systematic documentation and reflective analysis.

#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### 1. The Role of Teachers in Internalizing Religious Moderation Values

Teachers at MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan play a pivotal role in shaping the students' understanding of religious moderation through both formal instruction and personal example. The teachers not only deliver lessons from the Islamic Religious Education curriculum but also



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act as role models in their daily conduct. Students are observed to imitate teachers' ways of addressing differences, handling conflicts, and engaging respectfully with peers. The implicit messages communicated by teachers' behavior are often as impactful as the explicit content of the lessons. In this way, teachers embody the principle of "teaching by example," which is central to Islamic pedagogy. Their consistency in demonstrating fairness and respect reinforces moderation values. The students thus learn that moderation is not merely theoretical but must be practiced in everyday interactions. Teachers, therefore, hold dual roles: as knowledge transmitters and as character builders.

Teachers also adopt specific teaching strategies to encourage critical thinking and tolerance(Review & Mirza, 2024). For example, in lessons about fiqh, students are introduced to multiple opinions from different schools of thought to highlight the diversity within Islam. This approach prevents the formation of rigid, exclusive interpretations and encourages acceptance of differences. Through classroom discussions, students are guided to appreciate that disagreement is natural and even beneficial in Islamic scholarship. Teachers deliberately create a safe space where diverse views can be expressed respectfully. This strategy develops intellectual humility and nurtures a culture of dialogue among students. Such pedagogical methods directly support the goal of fostering moderation as an educational value.

Another essential role of teachers lies in facilitating extracurricular activities that support the internalization of moderation. At MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan, teachers organize study groups, religious events, and social programs that integrate students from different backgrounds. These activities provide students with real-life contexts to practice cooperation, respect, and empathy. Teachers supervise and guide these programs to ensure they align with the school's mission of cultivating balanced religious understanding. The experiential nature of such activities makes moderation values more tangible and memorable for students. By extending learning beyond the classroom, teachers enable students to live the values rather than merely understand them intellectually. This holistic approach strengthens the moral foundation of learners.

Teachers also play a crucial role in addressing potential radical tendencies among students by identifying early warning signs. They monitor changes in students' attitudes,



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language, and social interactions to ensure they remain aligned with moderate principles. When certain students show signs of exclusivism or intolerance, teachers intervene through counseling and tailored lessons. These preventive measures reflect the school's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment. Teachers collaborate with school counselors and parents to address such cases comprehensively. This integrated strategy underscores the preventive and corrective functions of educators. By being proactive, teachers help students remain rooted in moderation and resilience against extremism.

The effectiveness of teachers in internalizing moderation is closely linked to their own professional development. MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan provides training sessions and workshops to enhance teachers' capacity in teaching religious moderation. These training activities equip teachers with new pedagogical techniques and updated knowledge about the concept of moderation in the Indonesian context. Teachers are encouraged to continually reflect on their practices and adapt them to changing student needs. Professional development also fosters a sense of solidarity among teachers in pursuing the shared mission of character education. This investment in teacher quality is directly reflected in the students' attitudes and behaviors. Continuous learning ensures that the moderation project remains relevant and effective.

Overall, the role of teachers at MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan goes beyond academic instruction. They act as moral exemplars, facilitators of dialogue, designers of experiential learning, guardians against extremism, and lifelong learners themselves. Their multifaceted role underscores the importance of teacher agency in the success of moderation education. Without teacher commitment and creativity, the curriculum's goals would remain abstract and unattainable. The daily practices of teachers transform moderation from a policy concept into lived student experience. This aligns with the Islamic principle that knowledge must be accompanied by action. Teachers thus stand at the center of the effort to shape future generations that embody balance, tolerance, and respect.

#### 2. The Role of School Culture in Promoting Religious Moderation

School culture at MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan provides a strong foundation for internalizing religious moderation values. The school emphasizes discipline, respect, and



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cooperation as part of its daily routines. These values are reinforced through morning assemblies, collective prayers, and cooperative cleaning activities. Such practices instill in students a sense of shared responsibility and respect for communal life. Teachers and administrators ensure that school rituals highlight inclusivity and fairness, thereby modeling moderation in institutional settings. The repeated exposure to these cultural practices helps students develop habits that align with moderation values. School culture thus operates as an implicit curriculum complementing the formal Islamic Religious Education syllabus.

One important aspect of school culture is the way diversity is embraced and celebrated. MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan encourages students to acknowledge and respect differences in background, ability, and opinion. Activities such as group projects and inter-class competitions are designed to mix students from different backgrounds, encouraging mutual respect and collaboration. These experiences reduce prejudice and foster empathy among students. School leaders emphasize unity in diversity as a principle that reflects Islamic teachings of rahmatan lil alamin. Through these practices, students internalize the idea that moderation is not only an abstract principle but a lived social reality. The inclusive environment builds resilience against exclusivism and intolerance.

The school also embeds religious moderation into its organizational policies and practices. For instance, student disciplinary actions are designed not only to correct behavior but also to promote reflection and forgiveness. When conflicts arise among students, restorative approaches are emphasized over punitive ones. This reflects the moderation principle of balance between justice and compassion. Administrators play a key role in ensuring that such policies are consistently implemented across the school. By institutionalizing moderation values, the school ensures that students see them not as temporary lessons but as permanent norms. The alignment between policy and practice enhances credibility and effectiveness.

Symbolic practices within the school environment also contribute to moderation. The design of school spaces, including posters, slogans, and wall decorations, emphasizes harmony, tolerance, and respect. These visual cues remind students daily of the values they are expected to practice. School ceremonies and commemorations of national and religious events



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are conducted inclusively, highlighting unity and shared identity. Students participate in collective performances, speeches, and prayers that reinforce the interconnectedness of religion, culture, and nationality. Such symbolic elements ensure that moderation values remain visible and accessible to the school community. They serve as continuous reinforcements that complement both formal and informal learning.

Parental involvement is also a crucial element of the school's cultural strategy. MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan engages parents through regular meetings, workshops, and community events. These programs aim to align school efforts with the family's role in instilling moderation. Parents are encouraged to model moderation at home and support the school's initiatives. This collaboration ensures that students receive consistent messages about tolerance and balance across different environments. The integration of family and school efforts strengthens the effectiveness of value internalization. Without such alignment, students might experience conflicting values that weaken the impact of school programs.

Overall, the culture of MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan demonstrates that moderation cannot be taught solely through textbooks or classroom lectures. It must be lived, practiced, and reinforced within the broader school environment. By embedding moderation into daily practices, organizational policies, symbolic expressions, and parental engagement, the school builds a holistic environment that nurtures balanced character development. This systemic approach transforms moderation from a concept into a lifestyle. As a result, students not only learn moderation but also practice it as part of their identity. School culture thus serves as both the soil and the water that nourish the seeds of moderation planted by teachers and curriculum.

#### 3. Challenges in Implementing Religious Moderation

Despite its successes, MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan faces significant challenges in implementing religious moderation. One of the main obstacles is the influence of digital media on students. Many students access online content that promotes intolerance or exclusivist views, which can contradict the values taught at school. Teachers and administrators find it difficult to monitor and control these external influences. The accessibility of social media and online platforms means students are continuously exposed to competing ideologies. This



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creates a tension between the values promoted at school and the narratives encountered online. As a result, the school must work harder to counteract these external influences.

Another challenge lies in the diversity of family backgrounds. Not all parents are equally committed to promoting moderation at home. Some families may hold conservative or rigid views that conflict with the school's emphasis on inclusivity and tolerance. This inconsistency can confuse students, as they receive mixed messages from different authority figures. Teachers report that such contradictions sometimes lead to resistance among students toward moderation-related lessons. Bridging the gap between school and family values remains a complex task. The school's efforts to involve parents in workshops and discussions are not always successful in changing deep-seated attitudes.

Institutional constraints also hinder the full implementation of moderation education. Limited financial and material resources restrict the school's ability to expand extracurricular programs or provide adequate training for teachers. While the school organizes various initiatives, their scope is often limited by budgetary concerns. Teachers sometimes have to rely on personal creativity and voluntary contributions to sustain programs. This resource limitation affects the sustainability of moderation activities. Without consistent funding and support, the school risks overburdening teachers and reducing the effectiveness of programs. Institutional support at higher levels is therefore crucial for long-term success.

Curriculum overload is another challenge faced by the school. Teachers are required to cover extensive subject matter within limited classroom time. This sometimes leaves little room for in-depth discussions of moderation values. As a result, moderation themes may be treated superficially rather than explored in depth. Teachers struggle to balance academic targets with character-building goals. Students may also prioritize subjects that are tested in national exams over moral education lessons. This creates a structural obstacle to embedding moderation meaningfully into the curriculum. Without curriculum reform, the emphasis on moderation may remain secondary.

Resistance among a minority of students also poses a challenge. Some students may initially perceive moderation as a sign of weakness or compromise. They may prefer more rigid interpretations of religion influenced by peer groups or online communities. Teachers



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must work patiently to demonstrate that moderation is not about weakening faith but about strengthening harmony and justice. Overcoming such misconceptions requires sustained effort and trust-building. This resistance, however, highlights the need for continuous dialogue and innovative teaching methods. It also demonstrates that moderation education is not a one-time lesson but an ongoing process.

In summary, the challenges in implementing religious moderation at MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan include digital influences, family diversity, resource limitations, curriculum overload, and student resistance. These obstacles highlight the complexity of character education in a rapidly changing society. While the school has made significant progress, addressing these challenges requires broader systemic support. Collaboration with families, policymakers, and the community is essential to strengthen the school's efforts. The challenges also underscore the need for innovation and adaptability in teaching methods. Recognizing and responding to these barriers is crucial for sustaining the internalization of moderation values.

#### 4. Strategies for Strengthening Religious Moderation

To address the challenges, MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan has developed several strategies to strengthen religious moderation. One major approach is the integration of moderation themes across different subjects, not only within Islamic Religious Education. Teachers of other disciplines, such as social studies and language, incorporate discussions about tolerance, cooperation, and diversity. This interdisciplinary strategy ensures that moderation values are not isolated but reinforced throughout the curriculum. By weaving moderation into multiple subjects, students encounter consistent messages in various learning contexts. This approach helps moderation become a unifying theme in their overall education.

The school also invests in experiential learning as a strategy to reinforce moderation values. Students participate in social service activities, community projects, and interfaith programs that expose them to diversity in practice. For example, they may collaborate with local communities in environmental projects or charitable activities. These real-life experiences help students see moderation as relevant and applicable beyond school walls. Teachers guide reflection sessions after activities to connect experiences with Islamic principles of balance and compassion. This hands-on approach ensures that moderation is not



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merely abstract but embodied in concrete action. Experiential learning thus serves as a bridge between theory and practice.

Strengthening collaboration with parents and the community is another key strategy. The school regularly organizes workshops and parent-teacher meetings that emphasize the importance of religious moderation. Religious leaders and community figures are invited to participate in school programs to provide broader support. These initiatives aim to align the values taught at school with those practiced at home and in the community. By involving multiple stakeholders, the school creates a stronger ecosystem for moderation education. This collaboration helps overcome the problem of conflicting values between school and family. It also ensures that students experience consistent reinforcement of moderation across contexts.

The use of digital platforms has also been embraced as a strategy to counter negative online influences. The school encourages teachers and students to create positive digital content, such as videos, blogs, and social media posts that promote tolerance and inclusivity. Digital literacy programs are introduced to help students critically evaluate the information they encounter online. By equipping students with digital skills, the school empowers them to resist harmful narratives. This proactive approach transforms digital challenges into opportunities for spreading moderation values. It also prepares students to be responsible digital citizens in the modern era.

Professional development for teachers remains a central strategy in sustaining moderation education. The school arranges training sessions, peer-learning activities, and collaborations with external institutions to enhance teachers' skills. These programs update teachers on contemporary challenges and equip them with innovative methods for teaching moderation. Teachers are also encouraged to share best practices and reflect on their experiences collectively. This culture of continuous learning ensures that teachers remain motivated and capable of adapting to changing contexts. Professional development thus strengthens the backbone of moderation education: the educators themselves.

In conclusion, MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan employs a comprehensive set of strategies to strengthen religious moderation, including curriculum integration, experiential learning, community collaboration, digital engagement, and teacher development. These strategies



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demonstrate the school's proactive and adaptive approach to character education. By combining classroom instruction with real-life experiences and systemic collaboration, the school ensures that moderation values are deeply internalized. While challenges remain, these strategies provide sustainable pathways for nurturing students' balanced character. The school's experience can serve as a model for other institutions seeking to cultivate moderation in their educational practices.

#### **CONCLUSION**

the internalization of religious moderation values at MTs Al-Yakin Pungpungan is realized through a combination of teacher roles, school culture, and collaborative strategies involving families and communities. Teachers serve as both knowledge transmitters and role models, while school culture reinforces moderation through daily practices, policies, and symbolic expressions. Despite challenges such as digital influences, family diversity, and resource limitations, the school has developed adaptive strategies including curriculum integration, experiential learning, parental involvement, and digital literacy programs. These efforts highlight that moderation education is not a static process but a dynamic, continuous practice that requires commitment from multiple stakeholders. The study concludes that the success of internalizing religious moderation depends on synergy between teachers, institutions, families, and communities in preparing students to become tolerant, balanced, and morally responsible individuals in a plural society.

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