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## RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: CONCEPT, PRINCIPLES, AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Raja Ritonga<sup>1</sup>, H. Ilham Sentosa<sup>2</sup>, Ahmad Yani Nasution<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Mandailing Natal, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Pondok Pesantren Ittihadul Mukhlisin, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia Sumatera Barat, Indonesia

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### ✉ Correspondence to:

Name: Raja Ritonga

Email: [rajaritonga@stain-madina.ac.id](mailto:rajaritonga@stain-madina.ac.id)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8726-1446>

**Abstract:** Religious moderation has become an important discourse in contemporary Islamic education, particularly in plural societies where social harmony and peaceful coexistence are essential. Educational institutions play a strategic role in shaping students' perspectives toward religion, diversity, and social responsibility. Within this context, Islamic education is expected to promote balanced religious understanding that encourages tolerance, dialogue, and respect for diversity. This study aims to analyze the concept and educational implementation of religious moderation within Islamic education, particularly in the context of pesantren institutions. The research employed a qualitative library research approach by examining scholarly literature related to religious moderation, Islamic education, and multicultural learning. Data were collected through the analysis of academic books, journal articles, and relevant policy documents discussing the development of moderation values in Islamic education. The findings indicate that religious moderation in Islamic education is developed through the integration of ethical values, multicultural awareness, and balanced religious understanding within educational practices. Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren play an important role in cultivating moderation values through religious learning, character education, and communal interaction among students. These educational processes contribute to the formation of moderate Muslim identities characterized by tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility. This study highlights that the integration of moderation values within Islamic education provides an important framework for strengthening peaceful coexistence in plural societies.

**Keywords:** religious moderation; Islamic education; pesantren; multicultural education; religious tolerance

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious diversity has become an inherent characteristic of modern societies. In multicultural countries such as Indonesia, individuals from different religious traditions, ethnic groups, and cultural backgrounds interact within shared social spaces. These conditions require the development of social attitudes that emphasize tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. In this context, the concept of religious moderation has emerged as an important framework for maintaining social harmony and preventing the spread of extreme religious attitudes. Religious moderation encourages balanced religious understanding, openness to dialogue, and respect for diversity in social life (Azra, 2019; Hasan, 2021).

In contemporary Islamic education research, religious moderation has increasingly become a central theme for understanding how educational institutions contribute to social harmony and balanced religious perspectives. Recent scholarly discussions emphasize the importance of examining moderation through various educational frameworks within Islamic education (Partahian, 2025).

The growing discourse on religious moderation has received significant attention within the field of Islamic education. Educational institutions are widely considered strategic environments for shaping students' perspectives on religion, social diversity, and civic responsibility. Through educational processes, students are expected to develop religious understanding that promotes ethical awareness and social harmony. Islamic education, therefore, plays an important role in cultivating moderate religious attitudes among Muslim youth by integrating religious teachings with moral development and social awareness (Zuhdi, 2018; Nasir & Rijal, 2021).

Among Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, pesantren have long played a central role in transmitting religious knowledge and shaping students' character. Pesantren education integrates religious instruction with character formation, discipline, and communal living. Students not only study Islamic sciences but also experience daily interaction within a structured community guided by religious values. This holistic educational environment allows pesantren to influence students' intellectual, moral, and social development simultaneously (Hefner, 2016; Mukhibat, 2020).

The concept of moderation within Islamic education is closely related to the development of balanced religious perspectives that avoid both exclusivism and radicalism. Moderation encourages Muslims to understand religious teachings in ways that emphasize justice, compassion, and respect for others. In plural societies, such perspectives are essential for strengthening social cohesion and maintaining peaceful relations among different communities. Educational environments that promote moderation values therefore contribute significantly to the development of tolerant and responsible citizens (Azra, 2019; Hasan, 2021).

Previous studies have shown that Islamic educational institutions contribute significantly to the development of moderate religious perspectives in society. Pesantren, in particular, have historically been recognized as institutions that

promote inclusive Islamic traditions and encourage tolerance among Muslim communities. Through religious instruction, character education, and communal interaction, pesantren create learning environments that shape students' attitudes toward diversity and social responsibility (Mukhibat, 2020; Zuhdi, 2018). Educational practices within pesantren communities often emphasize ethical behavior, discipline, and respect for others as essential components of religious life.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly emphasized the importance of integrating religious moderation into Islamic education as a response to contemporary social challenges. Radicalism, social polarization, and the spread of extreme religious narratives have raised concerns about the role of education in shaping balanced religious perspectives. As a result, educational initiatives that promote dialogue, critical thinking, and inclusive religious understanding have become central strategies for strengthening moderation values within Islamic educational institutions (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Fahham, 2020).

Educational approaches that emphasize moderation values aim to develop students' awareness of diversity and encourage responsible participation in society. Such approaches integrate religious teachings with ethical reflection and social responsibility, enabling students to understand religion not only as doctrinal knowledge but also as guidance for living harmoniously with others. These educational practices contribute to the development of empathy, tolerance, and constructive social interaction among students (Sugianto, 2023; Prasetyo, 2024).

Recent research also highlights the importance of adapting Islamic education to contemporary social transformations, including digital communication, multicultural interaction, and global cultural exchange. In modern societies, students are increasingly exposed to diverse perspectives through digital media and global networks. Consequently, Islamic education must develop educational strategies that strengthen students' ability to engage critically with diverse ideas while maintaining balanced religious perspectives (Hanif, 2025; Santoso, 2025).

In addition, multicultural educational perspectives emphasize the importance of educational systems that encourage dialogue and mutual understanding among individuals from diverse backgrounds. Multicultural approaches within Islamic education can strengthen students' awareness of diversity and promote social attitudes that support peaceful coexistence. Such perspectives emphasize that religious commitment should be accompanied by respect for differences and constructive engagement with society (Zalnur, 2023; Shah, 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on religious moderation in Islamic education, many existing studies primarily focus on institutional roles, policy frameworks, or specific educational practices. Discussions that examine the conceptual foundations of religious moderation within Islamic educational thought remain relatively limited. Understanding the conceptual framework of moderation is important for developing educational models that effectively integrate ethical values, social awareness, and balanced religious understanding within Islamic education.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the conceptual foundations and educational implementation of religious moderation within Islamic education. By examining theoretical perspectives and educational practices related to moderation values, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how Islamic educational institutions can contribute to the development of balanced religious perspectives in plural societies. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of Islamic education scholarship and provide insights for strengthening moderation-based educational approaches in contemporary Islamic educational institutions (Zamroni et al., 2025; Hosaini, 2024).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative library research approach to analyze the concept and educational implementation of religious moderation within Islamic education. Library research focuses on examining theoretical perspectives and scholarly discussions derived from academic literature, allowing researchers to explore conceptual frameworks and interpret existing knowledge on specific topics. This approach is widely used in educational research to analyze ideas, concepts, and theoretical developments related to social and educational phenomena (Creswell, 2014).

The data used in this research were obtained from various academic sources, including scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and relevant policy documents discussing religious moderation and Islamic education. These sources were selected based on their relevance to the themes of religious moderation, Islamic educational philosophy, and the development of moderation values in educational institutions.

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature review by identifying, selecting, and examining academic publications related to the study topic. The selected literature was then analyzed to identify key themes, conceptual arguments, and theoretical perspectives concerning the integration of moderation values within Islamic education (Bowen, 2009).

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This analytical process involved organizing the literature, interpreting conceptual patterns, and synthesizing the main ideas found in the selected sources. Through this process, the study identifies the conceptual foundations of religious moderation and explains how these concepts can be integrated into Islamic educational practices.

## RESULTS

This section presents the conceptual findings of the study concerning the development of religious moderation within Islamic education. Based on the analysis of relevant literature, the results highlight several conceptual dimensions that explain how moderation values can be understood and implemented within Islamic educational environments. The findings are organized into four major themes: the concept of religious moderation in Islamic education, the core values

of moderation, educational strategies for promoting moderation, and the role of pesantren as institutions of moderation-based education.

### **Concept of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education**

Religious moderation in Islamic education refers to a balanced approach to religious understanding that avoids both extremism and exclusivism while encouraging tolerance, dialogue, and respect for diversity. Within Islamic educational discourse, moderation emphasizes the importance of interpreting religious teachings in ways that promote social harmony and peaceful coexistence in plural societies. Scholars argue that moderation reflects the fundamental Islamic principle of *wasatiyyah*, which encourages Muslims to adopt balanced perspectives in religious belief and social interaction (Azra, 2019; Hasan, 2021).

In educational contexts, religious moderation functions as a framework for guiding students to understand religion not merely as a set of doctrinal rules but as a source of ethical guidance for social life. Islamic education therefore plays an essential role in shaping students' perspectives on diversity and promoting attitudes that support peaceful coexistence within multicultural societies (Zuhdi, 2018). Educational institutions that emphasize moderation values encourage students to develop critical thinking, openness toward differences, and constructive engagement with society (Nasir & Rijal, 2021).

The concept of moderation within Islamic education also highlights the importance of integrating religious knowledge with social awareness and ethical responsibility. Such integration enables students to develop balanced religious perspectives that recognize the complexity of contemporary social realities. As a result, Islamic educational institutions can contribute significantly to strengthening social cohesion and preventing the development of radical religious attitudes (Mukhibat, 2020).

### **Core Values of Religious Moderation**

The development of religious moderation within Islamic education is closely connected to several core ethical values that guide students' attitudes and behavior. These values reflect the ethical principles emphasized within Islamic teachings as well as the social values required for maintaining harmonious relationships in plural societies.

One of the central values of moderation is tolerance. Tolerance encourages individuals to respect religious and cultural differences while maintaining their own religious commitments. Within educational environments, tolerance is developed through dialogue, mutual understanding, and respectful interaction among students from diverse backgrounds (Fahham, 2020).

Another important value is balance in religious understanding. Balanced perspectives enable students to avoid rigid interpretations of religious teachings while recognizing the importance of contextual understanding in interpreting Islamic principles. This balanced approach encourages students to develop moderate religious attitudes characterized by openness and empathy toward others (Sugianto, 2023).

In addition to tolerance and balance, moderation values also include social responsibility and ethical awareness. Educational practices that emphasize

responsibility encourage students to understand that religious commitment should contribute to the well-being of society. These values strengthen students' awareness of their roles as members of diverse communities and encourage them to participate constructively in social life (Prasetyo, 2024).

Table 1. Core Values of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education

Moderation Value	Description	Educational Implication
<b>Tolerance</b>	Respecting religious and cultural differences while maintaining one's own religious commitment	Encouraging respectful dialogue and interaction among students from diverse backgrounds
<b>Balance (Wasatiyyah)</b>	Avoiding extreme interpretations of religious teachings and promoting balanced understanding	Developing contextual and critical understanding of Islamic teachings
<b>Social Responsibility</b>	Understanding religion as a foundation for contributing to social harmony	Encouraging participation in community engagement and cooperative social activities
<b>Ethical Awareness</b>	Emphasizing moral conduct and empathy in social interaction	Strengthening character education and ethical development among students

The development of these moderation values within Islamic education therefore contributes to the formation of ethical and socially responsible individuals. By cultivating tolerance, balance, responsibility, and ethical awareness, educational institutions can help students develop attitudes that support peaceful coexistence within multicultural societies.

### **Educational Strategies for Moderation Development**

Educational strategies play an important role in promoting moderation values within Islamic education. These strategies involve the integration of moderation principles into curriculum design, teaching methods, and institutional culture. Through such strategies, educational institutions can create learning environments that encourage dialogue, critical thinking, and social awareness among students.

One important strategy is the integration of moderation values within the curriculum. Islamic educational curricula that incorporate discussions on tolerance, pluralism, and social responsibility enable students to develop broader perspectives on religious teachings. Such curricular integration helps students understand the relevance of Islamic values in addressing contemporary social challenges (Asrohah, 2024).

Another strategy involves the use of dialogical learning approaches. Educational practices that encourage discussion and reflection allow students to explore diverse perspectives and develop critical thinking skills. Dialogical learning environments also provide opportunities for students to engage with different viewpoints in respectful and constructive ways (Nasir & Rijal, 2021).

In addition, the development of moderation values can also be strengthened through character education and social engagement activities. Programs that emphasize community service, collaborative learning, and intercultural dialogue contribute to the development of empathy and social awareness among students. Such educational practices encourage students to understand religion as a source of ethical guidance for social life (Hanif, 2025).

These educational strategies demonstrate that moderation values can be effectively integrated within Islamic educational environments when supported by curriculum development, participatory learning methods, and institutional commitment to inclusive educational practices.

### **Pesantren as Institutions of Moderation Education**

Pesantren institutions play a significant role in promoting moderation values within Islamic education. As traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, pesantren provide a holistic learning environment that integrates religious instruction with character formation and communal living. This educational model allows students to experience religious teachings not only through formal instruction but also through everyday interaction within the pesantren community (Hefner, 2016; Mukhibat, 2020).

Within pesantren environments, moderation values are cultivated through various educational activities such as religious learning, ethical guidance, and communal practices. Students are encouraged to develop discipline, empathy, and mutual respect through daily interaction with teachers and fellow students. These educational experiences contribute to the formation of balanced religious perspectives that emphasize tolerance and social responsibility.

Pesantren culture also emphasizes the importance of moral leadership and ethical conduct. Teachers and religious leaders play a crucial role in guiding students' understanding of Islamic teachings and demonstrating moderation values in everyday life. Through this educational process, students gradually internalize ethical principles that shape their attitudes toward religion and society (Zalnur, 2023).

In contemporary contexts, pesantren institutions have increasingly adopted educational programs that promote moderation values as part of broader efforts to strengthen social harmony. Educational initiatives that integrate moderation principles into Islamic education contribute to the development of students' ability to engage constructively with diverse communities and respond to social challenges in plural societies (Shah, 2024; Zamroni et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings highlight that pesantren education provides a supportive environment for cultivating moderation values within Islamic education. Through the integration of religious learning, character education, and communal

interaction, pesantren institutions contribute significantly to the development of moderate religious perspectives among Muslim students.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that religious moderation within Islamic education is closely related to the development of balanced religious understanding, ethical awareness, and social responsibility among students. The conceptual analysis indicates that moderation values are cultivated through educational processes that integrate religious knowledge with social interaction and ethical reflection. These findings reinforce the theoretical perspective that Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping moderate religious attitudes within plural societies.

From a theoretical perspective, the concept of religious moderation in Islamic education is rooted in the Islamic principle of *wasatiyyah*, which emphasizes balance, justice, and avoidance of extreme positions in religious interpretation. Scholars argue that moderation represents a central ethical orientation within Islamic teachings, encouraging Muslims to adopt balanced perspectives that promote compassion, tolerance, and social harmony (Azra, 2019; Hasan, 2021). Within educational contexts, this principle provides an important framework for guiding students to understand religion not only as doctrinal knowledge but also as ethical guidance for interacting with diverse communities.

The results of this study also support previous research emphasizing the role of Islamic educational institutions in promoting moderation values. Earlier studies indicate that pesantren institutions contribute significantly to the development of inclusive Islamic traditions that encourage tolerance and social harmony. Islamic boarding schools provide educational environments in which students learn religious teachings while simultaneously developing ethical awareness and social responsibility through communal learning experiences (Mukhibat, 2020; Zuhdi, 2018). These findings confirm that Islamic education functions not only as a system for transmitting religious knowledge but also as a social institution that shapes students' moral and social attitudes.

In addition, the findings highlight the importance of integrating moderation values into educational strategies within Islamic learning environments. Educational practices that incorporate discussions on tolerance, pluralism, and civic responsibility enable students to develop broader perspectives on religious teachings. Such approaches encourage students to engage critically with religious knowledge while maintaining respect for diversity and social harmony (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Fahham, 2020). These perspectives align with contemporary educational theories that emphasize the importance of dialogical learning and critical reflection in developing inclusive educational environments.

The development of moderation values within Islamic education is also closely related to character education and ethical formation. Educational programs that emphasize moral values, empathy, and social responsibility contribute to the formation of students' ethical awareness and civic engagement. Such approaches encourage students to view religious commitment as a foundation for

contributing positively to society rather than as a basis for exclusivist attitudes (Sugianto, 2023; Prasetyo, 2024). Through character education and ethical reflection, Islamic educational institutions can cultivate students who demonstrate tolerance, cooperation, and respect for diversity.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that pesantren institutions provide a supportive educational environment for the development of moderation values. Pesantren education integrates religious instruction with communal living and character formation, allowing students to experience religious teachings through everyday social interaction. This educational model encourages the development of empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect among students, which are essential components of moderation-based religious attitudes (Hefner, 2016; Mukhibat, 2020). The communal nature of pesantren education therefore provides a practical environment for cultivating moderation values through lived educational experiences.

Recent studies also highlight the need for Islamic education to respond to contemporary social transformations, including globalization, digital communication, and multicultural interaction. Educational institutions are increasingly expected to develop strategies that enable students to engage constructively with diverse perspectives while maintaining balanced religious understanding. The integration of moderation values within Islamic education therefore becomes an important strategy for strengthening students' ability to navigate complex social realities in modern societies (Hanif, 2025; Santoso, 2025).

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the broader discourse on religious moderation in Islamic education by emphasizing the importance of conceptual understanding in developing moderation-based educational models. While many previous studies focus on institutional practices or policy initiatives, this research highlights the conceptual foundations that support the development of moderation values within Islamic educational thought. By examining the relationship between moderation concepts, educational values, and institutional practices, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic education can contribute to the development of balanced religious perspectives.

In addition, the findings demonstrate that moderation values in Islamic education are closely connected to multicultural educational perspectives that promote dialogue and mutual understanding among diverse communities. Educational frameworks that emphasize respect for diversity and constructive social interaction can strengthen students' awareness of pluralism and encourage responsible participation in society (Zalnur, 2023; Shah, 2024). These perspectives highlight the importance of integrating moderation values within educational systems as part of broader efforts to strengthen social harmony in plural societies.

Overall, the discussion suggests that religious moderation within Islamic education requires the integration of conceptual understanding, ethical formation, and inclusive educational practices. Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren can play an important role in developing moderation-based educational models by integrating religious knowledge, character education, and communal

interaction within their educational systems. Such integration enables Islamic education to contribute significantly to the development of moderate Muslim identities that emphasize tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility in contemporary societies.

The conceptual framework of religious moderation in Islamic education also has practical implications for curriculum development and educational practice. Studies on moderation-based curriculum models indicate that educational institutions can integrate moderation values through learning strategies, character education programs, and dialogical teaching approaches that encourage tolerance and social responsibility (Nasution et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION

This study highlights that religious moderation within Islamic education represents an important framework for developing balanced religious perspectives in plural societies. The findings indicate that moderation values are closely connected to ethical awareness, social responsibility, and inclusive religious understanding. Islamic education therefore plays a strategic role in shaping students' attitudes toward diversity while simultaneously strengthening their commitment to religious principles.

The study also demonstrates that moderation values can be effectively developed through educational processes that integrate religious learning, character education, and social interaction within educational institutions. Through these educational practices, students are encouraged to develop tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity as essential components of their religious and social identity.

Furthermore, Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren provide an important environment for cultivating moderation values through communal learning experiences and moral guidance. The integration of conceptual understanding, ethical formation, and inclusive educational practices within Islamic education contributes significantly to the development of moderate Muslim identities. Future research may further explore how moderation-based educational models can be implemented across diverse Islamic educational contexts.

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