

Internalization of Religious Moderation Values Through Madrasah Culture: Fostering Tolerance and Wisdom

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia, as a country rich in ethnic, religious, racial, and cultural diversity, faces challenges in maintaining harmony among its various groups. Religious moderation serves as a vital solution to foster a harmonious society by promoting a balanced approach to practicing religious teachings, respecting differences, and avoiding extremism. Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, play a strategic role in internalizing the values of religious moderation through a culture that emphasizes compassion, peace, and tolerance. This study uses a qualitative method with a literature review approach. The findings reveal that madrasah culture plays a key role in instilling the values of religious moderation in students by creating an inclusive environment that respects diversity. Through a religion-based approach that highlights tolerance, madrasahs can nurture a generation capable of facing social diversity with openness and acceptance. This education focuses not only on theoretical knowledge but also on the practical application of these values in everyday life. Fostering tolerance and wisdom in dealing with differences is crucial in Indonesia's multicultural society. Therefore, the implementation of religious moderation within the curriculum and activities of madrasahs—through a comprehensive approach involving all school elements, including teachers and students—serves as an effective strategy to create a generation that is not only religiously literate but also capable of living harmoniously within social diversity.

Key words: Religious Moderation; Madrasah Culture; Tolerance; Wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the most populous country consisting of various ethnicities, religions, races, and cultures, is a clear example of extraordinary social diversity (Ratnaningsih et al., 2020). This diversity is a valuable cultural asset that plays an essential role in shaping the character of the nation. However, such diversity also presents its own challenges, particularly in maintaining harmony among different groups (Wibowo & Nurjanah, 2021). At times, differences can become a source of conflict, whether on a small scale between individuals or on a larger scale involving social and religious groups. Therefore, efforts are needed to preserve unity and cohesion within this diversity.

One concept that offers a solution to maintaining harmony amid diversity is religious moderation. Religious moderation is an approach that emphasizes a balanced attitude in practicing religious teachings, avoiding extremism or radicalization (Sutrisno, 2019b). This concept underlines the importance of tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation of differences in religious contexts. Religious moderation is not limited to interfaith tolerance but also includes how individuals wisely understand their own religion without viewing others as threats (AR, 2020). In Indonesia, where five major religions—Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism—are officially recognized, religious moderation is of paramount importance.

Religious moderation in Indonesia can serve as the foundation for creating a harmonious society where individuals and groups coexist respectfully without any sense of superiority over others (Saragih et al., 2021). In this context, education plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes of religious moderation. Education based on the values of religious moderation produces individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also spiritually mature, respectful of differences, and capable of avoiding actions that could harm social harmony.

Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, have a highly strategic role in internalizing the values of religious moderation. Madrasahs do not only provide religious education but also shape students' character through Islamic values of *rahmatan lil-'alamin*, which promote compassion, peace, and respect for differences (Tule, 2000). The culture within madrasahs that prioritizes moral and spiritual values offers a highly effective platform for fostering moderate attitudes among students. In the madrasah environment, students not only learn religious theory but are also expected to apply those teachings in daily life through tolerance, mutual respect, and refraining from judging other religions.

In addition, madrasah culture involves character development through activities that nurture social values. In many cases, these values are internalized through relationships among students, between students and teachers, and through social and religious activities conducted outside of classroom hours (Akhmadi, 2019). For instance, congregational prayers, religious study sessions, and discussions held at madrasahs can serve as platforms to instill an understanding of the importance of religious moderation. Furthermore, the values of cooperation and teamwork promoted through extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to learn about the importance of appreciating diversity and building tolerance.

A strong madrasah culture is also reflected in the exemplary attitudes of teachers, who serve not only as instructors but also as role models in religious and social life (Asmara, 2018). Through compassionate interactions and exemplary conduct, teachers can help shape moderate attitudes in students and teach them how to approach differences wisely. Teachers also play an important role in delivering lessons that go beyond academic knowledge, introducing values of tolerance and wisdom in social life.

The attitudes of tolerance and wisdom fostered through madrasah culture equip students with the ability to appreciate religious, cultural, and ideological differences around them. Religious tolerance in this context is not just about accepting differences but also understanding and appreciating the human rights that underpin religious freedom (Atmanto & Muzayanah, 2020). Students nurtured in a madrasah environment that emphasizes religious moderation are better able to view other religions as part of diversity, not as threats or adversaries.

The wisdom referred to here is the ability to live social life with mutual respect and a prioritization of the common good, without compromising one's religious principles (Muhid & Fadeli, 2018). Such wisdom will form individuals who are not easily provoked by divisive issues and who can think clearly and make wise decisions when facing differences. Therefore, internalizing the values of religious moderation through madrasah culture can produce individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also socially mature and capable of navigating the dynamics of diversity.

In practice, the internalization of religious moderation values in madrasahs cannot be separated from effective Islamic education management. An education management system grounded in religious moderation values creates an educational atmosphere that holistically supports character development in students (Sutrisno, 2019a). Sound Islamic education management ensures that all educational elements—curriculum, educators, and extracurricular activities—operate in alignment with the principles of religious moderation (Shinde, 2015). This creates a conducive environment for students to develop intellectually, socially, and spiritually.

Despite the numerous efforts made to instill religious moderation values in madrasahs, challenges remain. One significant challenge is the influence of external cultures that sometimes conflict with the values being instilled. In this case, madrasah education must be able to filter incoming information and ensure that students maintain a solid foundation in understanding religion moderately. Moreover, strengthening cooperation between madrasahs, parents, and communities is essential to support religious moderation education so that these values extend into students' homes and social environments outside the madrasah.

Given the crucial role of madrasahs in shaping attitudes of religious moderation, this study aims to explore how madrasah culture contributes to the internalization of religious moderation values (Nugraha & Firmansyah, 2019). The research also seeks to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in this process, as well as the impact on the development of tolerance and wisdom among students. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective educational models to shape a moderate, tolerant, and wise generation capable of maintaining harmony amidst diversity.

Through this study, it is hoped that the role of madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions will be further emphasized in fostering religious moderation among the younger generation—not only in understanding religious teachings intellectually but also in practicing them daily with tolerance and wisdom. The results of this research can serve as a reference for developing educational policies in madrasahs so that Islamic education becomes more relevant to contemporary needs and the increasingly complex challenges of diversity. In doing so, madrasah education can make a direct contribution to creating a more harmonious, peaceful, and tolerant society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Studies

Recently, there have been several studies discussing religious moderation, particularly in the context of education. The first study refers to Ratnaningsih et al. (2020), who emphasize Indonesia's diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious makeup. The study reveals that although diversity is a strength, it also poses a risk of conflict if not addressed wisely. They argue that cultivating tolerance and harmony through education is essential to managing potential social tensions.

The second study is by Sutrisno (2019), who discusses religious moderation as a balanced way of embracing religious beliefs without leaning toward radicalism or liberalism. This study highlights values such as tolerance, mutual respect, and social wisdom in responding to religious differences. Sutrisno emphasizes that educational institutions like madrasahs should play an active role in instilling these values, particularly in multicultural settings.

The third study by Akhmadi (2019) focuses on the integration of religious moderation values through school culture. He argues that madrasahs are capable of internalizing tolerance, social harmony, and peace by cultivating habits such as prayer activities, religious discussions, and inclusive extracurricular programs. The study shows that students exposed to such environments tend to be more socially mature and respectful of religious differences.

These three studies collectively highlight the importance of embedding religious moderation values in education. However, they do not explore in depth how madrasah culture specifically becomes a medium for internalizing tolerance, mutual respect, and social wisdom. Therefore, this research offers a novelty by investigating these three specific values within the cultural context of madrasahs.

Religious Moderation Values

This study uses the framework of religious moderation as described by Sutrisno (2019) and Shinde (2015), who define religious moderation as a balanced, tolerant, and respectful attitude toward different beliefs and practices. According to them,

the key elements of religious moderation include tolerance (acceptance of religious differences), mutual respect (valuing others' beliefs), and social wisdom (acting wisely and peacefully in interfaith contexts).

However, this research focuses only on three values: tolerance, mutual respect, and social wisdom, because these values are often discussed broadly but are not sufficiently examined as part of madrasah culture. These selected values serve as the foundation for investigating how madrasah culture contributes to building a generation that embraces religious moderation in both thought and action. The focus on these specific elements makes the current research distinct from previous ones and adds a unique contribution to the ongoing discourse..

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a library research method to explore how the internalization of religious moderation values through madrasah culture can shape students' attitudes of tolerance and wisdom. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to deeply understand the phenomenon occurring in madrasahs holistically, as well as to interpret the meaning, processes, and dynamics involved in shaping religious moderation attitudes. Moreover, this approach enables the researcher to explore the social and cultural contexts influencing the development of these values in students. As this is a library-based study, the "sample" in this context refers to the literature sources—including academic books, journal articles, research reports, theses, and official education policy documents—that are relevant to religious moderation, madrasah culture, Islamic character education, and tolerance values in Islamic education.

Instrument and Procedures

The main instrument of this study is document analysis, wherein the researcher acts as the key instrument, systematically collecting and interpreting texts and academic sources. The research steps include:

1. Identifying and collecting literature relevant to the topic, especially those discussing religious moderation, tolerance, character education in madrasahs, and value-based Islamic educational management.
2. Selecting and organizing academic books, scientific journal articles, research findings, theses, and education policy documents that focus on the application of religious moderation in Islamic schools.
3. Carefully analyzing each source to extract core concepts, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings related to the internalization of tolerance, mutual respect, and social wisdom within madrasah settings.

4. Synthesizing findings into a coherent narrative that addresses the research questions regarding the role of madrasah culture in forming moderate, tolerant, and wise student character.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical methods, which involved describing phenomena based on the collected literature and interpreting them to draw conclusions. The researcher used a thematic approach, organizing information under major themes such as religious moderation, character education, madrasah culture, tolerance, and wisdom. Each theme was examined in depth to gain a comprehensive understanding of how madrasah culture contributes to internalizing religious moderation values. Patterns, relationships, and contextual insights were identified to answer the research problem. The results of this analysis are then interpreted to illustrate how madrasah culture helps form student characters who are tolerant, wise, and respectful of religious diversity. The researcher also identified supporting and inhibiting factors in the internalization process and offered recommendations for developing more inclusive and character-oriented educational policies in madrasah.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Importance of Madrasah Culture in Instilling the Values of Religious Moderation

Madrasah culture plays a critical role in fostering religious moderation, which is increasingly essential in the context of pluralism and evolving social dynamics (Mulyadi, 2018). As Islamic educational institutions, madrasahs must not only teach religious knowledge but also promote respect for diversity and peaceful coexistence among students of different backgrounds.

The term “madrasah culture” encompasses interactions, learning activities, and the values upheld within the school (Uzma Qatrunnada et al., 2021). Madrasahs should introduce religious moderation early, balancing religious teachings with social life, to prevent narrow-mindedness and extremism. Teachers must impart Islamic principles that encourage peace, tolerance, and respect, ensuring students see Islam as a solution to social challenges.

Madrasah culture should also foster interfaith respect through inclusive practices, such as collaborative activities and shared religious events (Dodego & Witro, 2020). Religious education should extend beyond texts to practical social contexts, fostering moderate values that promote inclusivity. Policies should support diversity, helping counter radicalization (Sutrisno, 2019a). Character education grounded in religious moderation shapes students into wise and discerning individuals. A curriculum that integrates universal social values like justice, equality, and humanity is essential (AR, 2020). In such a culture, all students,

regardless of background, feel valued and develop tolerant attitudes, strengthening resilience against division.

Madrasahs must respond to societal challenges like interfaith intolerance and extremism by demonstrating how religious moderation can be applied daily (Atmanto & Muzayanah, 2020). Collaboration with parents, communities, and the government ensures that the values of religious moderation are embraced both inside and outside of madrasah life. Ultimately, madrasah culture rooted in moderation will produce a generation capable of upholding religious teachings while collaborating harmoniously across societal differences (Baharun & Nur Aini, 2020). Continuous evaluation of educational programs is crucial for improving the quality of religious moderation and ensuring its relevance in today's world.

Building Tolerance and Wisdom in Facing Social Diversity

Building tolerance and wisdom in Indonesia's diverse society requires education that fosters respect for differences. Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, play a key role in nurturing these attitudes from an early age. They should emphasize religious moderation, teaching students values like peace, compassion, and respect for others (Baharun & Nur Aini, 2020), while focusing on universal principles such as justice and equality.

In madrasahs, students from diverse backgrounds can interact and learn from one another. Activities that encourage cooperation, conflict resolution, and respect for differing opinions promote these values (Rofik & Misbah, 2021). Teaching history and culture helps students appreciate Indonesia's pluralism and avoid discriminatory attitudes (AR, 2020). Extracurricular activities, such as sports and arts, are effective tools for fostering mutual respect and teamwork (Rofik & Misbah, 2021). Madrasahs should also encourage respectful communication, teaching students to listen with empathy and speak politely to reduce conflict and build harmonious relationships.

Religious education, aligned with Islamic teachings on compassion and respect for others (Rofik & Misbah, 2021), should focus on fostering empathy towards people of different religions and practices. Wisdom in facing differences should be taught through discussions and debates, helping students handle differing opinions constructively. Parental and community involvement is essential in reinforcing these values outside of madrasah. Teachers should model tolerance and wisdom in their actions, leading by example (Rosyad et al., 2021). Education in madrasahs, therefore, not only imparts knowledge but also shapes character, preparing students to live peacefully in a diverse society.

Implementation Strategies for Religious Moderation in the Curriculum and Madrasah Activities

Implementing religious moderation in the curriculum and activities of madrasahs is essential for shaping a generation that understands religion and practices tolerance in a diverse society (Endah, 2012). Religious moderation teaches individuals to avoid extremism, choosing a middle path focused on peace, respect, and mutual understanding. Therefore, integrating these values into the curriculum and activities is vital. A curriculum emphasizing moderate, inclusive religious understanding should teach values like justice, compassion, and respect for others, regardless of background. This approach helps students recognize that religion promotes peace and harmony, not division. The curriculum should avoid fostering exclusive attitudes arising from narrow religious understandings.

Teaching the history of religions in a broader context is also important. Understanding the long struggle for peace and virtue in different religions, including Islam, helps students appreciate religious diversity. It's crucial to discuss social challenges in Indonesia, such as ethnic, religious, and cultural conflicts, so students develop critical thinking skills and learn to solve problems peacefully (Manshur & Husni, 2020). Extracurricular activities also play a significant role in instilling religious moderation. Events like discussions, seminars, and debates encourage students to engage respectfully with diverse perspectives. Character education, which includes values like honesty, justice, and tolerance, should be integrated into daily activities, teaching students to respect others regardless of their background.

Teachers must be trained to teach religious moderation effectively, ensuring they can manage interfaith discussions and help resolve conflicts in the classroom. Madrasahs should also foster an inclusive school environment that respects differences, offering events that bring together students from diverse backgrounds, such as joint religious celebrations (Kamali, 2015).

Religious education can also address human rights, democracy, and pluralism, helping students understand the importance of respecting others' beliefs and freedoms (Rohmat, 2019). Activities like visits to places of worship of other religions or interfaith dialogues can help students experience diversity firsthand and learn to appreciate differing viewpoints.

Regular evaluations of the curriculum and students' application of religious moderation values are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the program. Collaboration with the government, religious organizations, and the community can also support the implementation of religious moderation in education (Dewantara, 2017). Madrasahs should also promote the understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity, teaching students to appreciate pluralism and view the world from a broader perspective (Azzuhri, 2012). By integrating religious moderation into

madrasah life, we can create a peaceful, inclusive environment that fosters tolerance, respect, and wisdom, contributing to a harmonious society.

CONCLUSION

Madrasah culture plays a crucial role in instilling religious moderation values in students. Through an inclusive approach grounded in religious teachings that emphasize peace and tolerance, madrasahs can create a generation that is more open and capable of accepting differences. The religious moderation values instilled within the madrasah environment will form tolerant attitudes that are not only theoretical but also practical in students' daily lives, both inside and outside of school. Therefore, implementing a madrasah culture that respects religious diversity is vital for building a harmonious society.

Building tolerance and wisdom in facing social diversity is also essential in character development. In the context of Indonesia's diversity, which is rich in culture, ethnicity, and religion, tolerance values need to be instilled from an early age through education. Madrasahs, as religious educational institutions, have a great opportunity to teach students to appreciate differences, not only in terms of religious beliefs but also in social, cultural, and ethnic aspects. The tolerance attitudes taught in madrasahs will create harmonious interactions in society and promote peace amidst differences.

The strategy for implementing religious moderation in the madrasah curriculum and activities can be done in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. Formal education through a curriculum based on religious moderation, along with extracurricular activities that involve interactions among students from different backgrounds, can strengthen these values. Teachers and madrasah administrators also need to be involved in this process by providing training and preparation on the importance of religious moderation. All these efforts will result in the creation of a generation that not only possesses good religious knowledge but is also capable of living peacefully, respecting differences, and having wise attitudes in facing social challenges.

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