

Strategy for Internalizing the Value of Religious Moderation in Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Education on religious moderation values from an early age plays a crucial role in shaping children's character to be tolerant, inclusive, and respectful of differences. This study aims to explore strategies for internalizing religious moderation values in elementary school students through a holistic approach involving curriculum, interactive learning methods, teacher role models, school environment, and parental and community involvement. A qualitative case study approach was employed, utilizing participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using content and thematic analysis, and validity was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. The findings indicate that the internalization of religious moderation values can be carried out through curriculum integration, varied and interactive teaching methods, creation of a conducive school environment, active parental and community involvement, as well as habituation and teacher exemplification. The internalization model can be implemented individually, in groups, or in a classroom setting, covering I'tiqodiyah, Khuluqiyah, and Amaliyah aspects, thereby fostering students' moderate, responsible, and ethical character. This study provides practical implications for teachers, school principals, parents, and educational stakeholders in designing comprehensive and sustainable character education strategies based on religious moderation.

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Introduction

1 Background and Previous Literature Review

Education of religious values from an early age plays an important role in shaping children's character and outlook on life, especially in the context of a pluralistic society (Perdana, 2018) The internalization of the values of religious moderation is becoming increasingly relevant in facing the challenges of social change, technological developments, and ideological polarization that can divide the unity and unity of the nation. (Perdana, 2018; Romlah & Rusdi, 2023) In this digital era, elementary school students are exposed to a lot of information and influences that are not always in line with moderate religious values (Sri Lestari, 2024) Therefore, an effective strategy is needed to instill these values from an early age, so that it can become a strong foundation in their lives (Hayyan Ahmad Ulul Albab, 2022) Religious moderation is not only understood as a

theological concept, but also as a socio-cultural attitude that emphasizes tolerance, mutual respect, and fairness in interacting with people of different religions and beliefs. (Suhendi, 2024) Therefore, a comprehensive and effective strategy is needed to instill the values of religious moderation in elementary school students, so that they can grow into tolerant, inclusive, and respectful individuals. (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Suhendi, 2024) The internalization of values in character formation in students must go through three interrelated stages, starting from value transformation through the provision of verbal information, followed by value transactions through two-way interaction and concrete examples, to achieving transinternalization where these values become an inseparable part of students' mental attitudes and personalities. (Suhendi, 2024) The process of internalizing character education values in educational institutions requires a gradual and sustainable approach (Munif, 2017) One of the approaches is to do moral knowing, which is by focusing on students' cognitive development to understand the importance of religious moderation values.

Internalizing the values of religious moderation in elementary school students requires a holistic approach that involves various aspects of education, including curriculum, teaching methods, school environment, and the active role of teachers and parents (Ali & Firmansyah, 2023; Rofik & Misbah, 2021; Suprpto, 2020). The curriculum must be designed in such a way that the values of religious moderation are integrated in all subjects, not just limited to religious education. Relevant and contextual learning will help students relate the concept of religious moderation to daily life, so that the material becomes more interesting and easy to understand (Bahar, 2022). Material development should make use of concrete examples related to students' culture and social context. Varied and interactive teaching methods are also essential. Strategies such as group discussions, case studies, role-playing, and collaborative projects allow students to actively engage in learning, while also developing critical thinking skills, respecting the opinions of others, and solving problems peacefully (Harmi, 2022; Ikhwan et al., 2023). In addition, the habituation and example of teachers play a very important role in internalizing the values of moderation. Teachers who consistently show moderate behavior will inspire students to emulate the same attitude in daily life (Ali & Firmansyah, 2023). The role of parents is also significant; their involvement through open communication and support for the moderation curriculum reinforces the internalization of these values at home and at school.

One of the fundamental studies is a study conducted by Bahar (2022) that analyzes the internalization of religious moderation in education, showing the need to form the religious character of students in order to create harmonious social conditions. In addition, Rofik & Misbah (2021) research explains efforts to prevent religious radicalism through the implementation of moderation programs in schools, providing an overview of concrete steps that can be taken. Ikhwan et al. (2023) research also shows how Islamic religious education can contribute to the achievement of religious moderation, with a focus on education that impacts students' daily lives.

Although many studies focus on the theoretical and qualitative aspects of religious moderation, there are shortcomings in empirical studies based on integrating various components of education, such as curriculum, interactive methods, and the roles of teachers and parents. For example, Harmi examines the learning model of Islamic religious education that emphasizes moderation, but has not explored in depth

the impact of the learning environment and parental involvement in strengthening these values in daily life (Harmi, 2022).

Another weakness of previous research is the lack of a holistic approach that links theory, practice, and social context in religious moderation-based character education. As highlighted by Hamdani et al., their research examines the management of religious moderation in secondary schools, while aspects of primary education, especially in terms of how teachers exemplify and habituation of religious moderation values in daily life, are still rarely touched (Hamdan et al., 2020). These studies open up opportunities for further studies that explore not only the curriculum, but also the social interaction and active involvement of parents in educating their children about religious moderation.

2 Gap and Novelty Statement

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights, several gaps remain, which this study seeks to address through a holistic approach, there is a significant gap in research that brings together a holistic approach to internalizing the value of religious moderation, which does not only rely on formal curriculum but also involves interactive methods that create dialogue and reflection in the learning process. In other words, although there is a lot of research on religious moderation, few of them have conducted a comprehensive analysis of how the learning environment in schools, parental support, and teacher role models can together effectively internalize these values at the elementary school level.

This research presents a holistic approach to internalizing the value of religious moderation in elementary school students especially at SDN 1 Dawungsari, which integrates curriculum, interactive learning methods, teacher examples, school environment, and parental involvement. By comprehensively integrating theory, practice, and social context, this study aims to form moderate character in students from an early age, an aspect that has not been widely covered by previous research.

3 Research Objectives

This study aims to explore and explain the strategy of internalizing the value of religious moderation in elementary school students, by emphasizing the important role of curriculum, interactive learning methods, school environment, teacher examples, and parental involvement. In addition, this research also seeks to develop a holistic implementation model that can be applied in schools, so that the values of religious moderation can be instilled effectively and comprehensively, forming the character of students who are tolerant, inclusive, and respect differences from an early age.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore strategies for internalizing religious moderation values in elementary school students at SDN 1 Dawungsari. To achieve the research objectives, data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, in accordance with the qualitative approach described Creswell (2018) and Yin (2018).

Participatory observation is carried out to observe the interaction between teachers and students inside and outside the classroom, as well as the implementation of religious moderation values in daily school activities (Suhendi, 2024). In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, students, principals, and parents to explore their views, experiences, challenges, and expectations related to the internalization of moderation values. The document analysis includes a review of the curriculum, learning materials, and other relevant documents, to see the integration of the values of religious moderation in education (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively using content analysis and thematic analysis techniques. Content analysis is used to evaluate curriculum documents and teaching materials, with the aim of identifying themes related to the values of religious moderation (Bowen, 2009). Thematic analysis was applied to observation data and interviews to find patterns and themes that emerged related to the strategy of internalizing moderation values (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, several techniques are used, including triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation is done by comparing data from various sources (observations, interviews, documents) to see the consistency and convergence of findings. Member checking and peer debriefing were conducted to verify the researcher's interpretation and obtain input from peers and informants (Suhendi, 2024).

Results

The results of the study show that the internalization of religious moderation values in elementary school students can be carried out through several interrelated and mutually supportive strategies. First, the integration of religious moderation values in the curriculum and learning materials. The curriculum must be designed in such a way that the values of religious moderation are integrated in all subjects, not just limited to religious education.

Use of varied and interactive teaching methods. Teachers can use a variety of varied and interactive teaching methods, such as group discussions, case studies, role-playing, and collaborative projects, to increase student engagement in the learning process and develop critical thinking skills, respect the opinions of others, and solve problems peacefully. Third, creating a school environment that is conducive to the development of religious moderation values. The school environment must be created in such a way that it reflects the values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, inclusivity, and mutual respect.

Involvement of parents and the community in the educational process. In addition, teachers can also provide positive reinforcement to students who show behavior that reflects the values of religious moderation, as well as provide educational reprimands to students who take actions that are contrary to these values. Furthermore, the application of the *hidden curriculum* through routine activities, weekly activities, and exemplary behavior of teachers can also be an effective means of instilling religious values in students (Syarifuddin et al., 2021). The integration of these values in the curriculum and learning materials accompanied by active support from teachers, families, and the community is the main effort of character education to build a highly ethical and responsible person in every aspect of his life.

The role of religious teachers in building religious moderation in schools through an inclusive understanding of religious teachings, encouraging interfaith dialogue, emphasizing tolerance, providing spiritual guidance, and managing inclusive religious programs is very important (Lie, 2024). In other words, teachers play an important role in overcoming student problems in the daily environment, so it is necessary to build a religious culture in schools. (Nur Rohman et al., 2023).

Religious moral values such as piety, honesty, sincerity, and responsibility instilled in students are part of the *kurikulum tersembunyi*. (Munif, 2017). Religious character education can be integrated through learning without having to create a separate program. (Djazilan & Akhwani, 2022). Moderation education carried out by educators is not the process of memorizing exam materials and answering techniques, but the habit of doing good earnestly until it reaches the ideal form and strength.

Evaluation of the internalization of the values of religious moderation needs to be carried out periodically to measure the effectiveness of the strategies that have been implemented and identify things that need to be improved (Suhendi, 2024). Evaluations can be done in a variety of ways, such as observing student behavior, interviewing students and teachers, and analyzing school documents. The implementation of rules that require the collection of mobile phones in schools can minimize the negative impact of the digital era (Sri Lestari, 2024).

The internalization model of religious moderation values can be carried out individually, in groups, or in classical ways (Suhendi, 2024). The implementation of Islamic values includes I'tiqodiyah values through the habit of short lectures and congregational prayers, Khuluqiyah values through the cultivation of polite and disciplined attitudes, and Amaliyah values through recitation and prayer activities (Sri Lestari, 2024). Habituation of religious cultural values can be done through routine activities such as Friday night istighosah (Nurul Azizah et al., 2023). The school's efforts to build superior and virtuous human resources are carried out through three stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Strengthening the values of religious moderation can be done by providing a deep understanding of tolerance and mutual respect through related materials and activities that refer to religion as *rahmatan lil alamin*.

This is supported by research that shows that students' backgrounds greatly influence religious behavior, as well as school policies that influence the development of religious culture (Fatimah et al., 2020). Efforts to internalize the values of religious moderation in elementary school students require a comprehensive and sustainable approach, involving all elements of the school and society (Usman, 2017). The process of internalizing character education in educational institutions cannot be done instantly, but gradually and continuously (Munif, 2017).

Therefore, an effective model of internalizing the values of religious moderation needs to be carefully designed and implemented, taking into account the characteristics of primary school students and the local socio-cultural context.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been described, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. The strategy of internalizing religious moderation values in elementary school students can be carried out through integrating religious moderation values in the curriculum and teaching materials, the use of varied and interactive learning methods, the creation of a conducive school environment, the involvement of parents and the community, as well as habituation and example.
2. The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum by integrating the values of religious moderation in each learning material. Suggestions Based on the conclusions that have been described, the following suggestions are proposed:
3. For teachers, especially Islamic Religious Education teachers, it is hoped that it can increase the understanding and ability to internalize the values of religious moderation in elementary school students, as well as develop creative and innovative learning methods to instill these values.
4. For school principals, it is hoped that they can provide adequate support and facilities for the implementation of the program of internalizing religious moderation values in schools, as well as creating a school environment that is conducive to the development of these values. Parents and the community are expected to play an active role in supporting the implementation of the internalization program of religious moderation values in schools, as well as providing a good example for children in practicing these values in daily life.

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