



STRATEGIES OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN PROMOTING RELIGIOUS MODERATION AMONG MADRASAH STUDENTS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Ayit Irpani¹, Yani Astuti², Irpan³, Silmi Amrullah⁴

¹ Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Al-Falah Cicalengka Bandung

² MTsN 11 Tasikmalaya

³ Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Lakbok Ciamis

⁴ Balai Diklat Keagamaan Jakarta

ayitirpani@staialfalah.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examined the strategies applied by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to promote religious moderation among madrasah students in the digital era. The research was motivated by the increasing exposure of students to religious information via digital media, which often does not align with the principles of religious moderation and may influence students' religious attitudes. A qualitative case study approach was applied, focusing on two madrasah in Garut Regency between June and August 2025. Participants included 10 PAI teachers, 20 students, and 2 madrasah principals. Data collection methods comprised in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, with data analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The study identified four primary strategies: (1) leveraging social media to disseminate positive content on religious moderation, (2) implementing discussion-based learning to foster open dialogue, (3) modeling moderate attitudes and behaviors by teachers, and (4) integrating moderation values into lesson plans (RPP). Supporting factors included the availability of information technology resources and teacher training, while inhibiting factors encompass low digital literacy, exposure to negative online content, and students' limited concern due to a lack of role models in their environment. These results highlighted the necessity of integrating pedagogical strategies with supportive educational environments to enhance students' religious moderation in the digital era.

Keywords: PAI Teacher Strategy, Religious Moderation, Digital Era, Madrasah

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed communication patterns, social interactions, and the dissemination of information, including within religious contexts. While the digital age has increased access to diverse sources of Islamic knowledge, the unrestricted and rapid flow of information also enables the spread of extremist and intolerant ideologies that may affect students (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

Religious moderation, defined as a fair, tolerant, and respectful approach to religion, has become increasingly essential for the younger generation, particularly for madrasah students exposed to the overwhelming flow of digital information (Manshur, 2021). Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers hold a strategic position in shaping students' character and promoting moderate attitudes, both through formal instructional materials and by exemplifying positive behavior in daily interactions (Abdullah, 2020).



Previous research has emphasized the significant role of teachers in promoting religious moderation (Syamsuddin, 2022; Nurhadi, 2023). However, there is a lack of studies that specifically investigate the strategies used by Islamic Education teachers in madrasahs during the digital age, especially within regional contexts such as Garut Regency. Consequently, this study examines the strategies implemented by Islamic Education teachers to foster religious moderation among madrasah students in the digital era.

Religious Moderation

Religious moderation is defined as a perspective, attitude, and practice of religion that occupies a centrist position, avoiding both extremes, while upholding the values of tolerance, justice, and respect for diversity (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Key indicators of religious moderation include national commitment, tolerance, opposition to violence, and acceptance of local traditions. In addition to being a government policy (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019), religious moderation has attracted significant academic attention. Subchi, Zulkifli, Latifa, and Sa'diyah (2022) found that religiosity, which encompasses intellectual, ideological, public and private practice, and religious experience dimensions, contributes positively to religious moderation. Their research also identifies national commitment, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local culture as essential indicators on the religious moderation scale.

Furthermore, Mukhibat, Effendi, Setyawan, and Sutoyo (2024) developed and evaluated a religious moderation education curriculum in higher education. Their study demonstrates that implementing a two-credit religious moderation course effectively fosters knowledge, tolerance, national commitment, and opposition to violence. These findings indicate that the curriculum is effective in shaping moderate character and provides a strong foundation for developing learning and madrasah developing levels. and madrasah levels.

The Role of Islamic Education Teachers

Islamic education teachers serve not only as educators, mentors, role models, and facilitators, but also as information curators and guides in religious digital literacy in the digital age (Wahid, 2021). Sujanto, Kurniawan, and Holik (2023) emphasize that digital literacy constitutes a core component of 21st-century skills that must be acknowledged by both teachers and students; however, its implementation remains limited in madrasah settings. Safrudin and Sesmiarni (2022) argue that professional teachers should be selective in presenting religious digital media, acting as filters and evaluating content prior to its transmission to students. Kamaliya and Nailasari (2022) demonstrate that digital literacy can foster critical, independent, and evaluative character in students through the use of contextual digital media. The transformation of PAI teachers' competencies is a critical priority. Akbar and Saidah (2024) assert that teachers must enhance their digital literacy and pedagogical skills to create interactive and responsive learning environments. Shafi'i (2019) underscores the importance of ICT competencies and digital ethics in PAI education, while Kasnuri (2025) maintains that teachers with strong character and



technological adaptability are more effective in instilling Islamic moral values through prudent digital practices.

Learning Strategies for Religious Moderation

Effective strategies for teaching religious moderation include integrating moderation values into the curriculum, employing discussion-based methods, utilizing digital media, and fostering moderate behavior in daily life (Hasanah, 2022). Beyond curriculum integration and discussion, these strategies also involve digital engagement and collaboration across multiple domains. Nurqadriani et al. (2023) highlight the importance of a holistic approach that incorporates both curricular and extracurricular activities, as well as family support, to promote tolerant attitudes through students' digital literacy. In the post-truth era, Suprpto (2020) introduces a moderation-oriented Islamic Education curriculum model that features interfaith dialogue, the cultivation of tolerance, and the rejection of hate speech and misinformation within schools. Research conducted at Sangatta Utara Junior High School by Zahra et al. (2022) illustrates that religious moderation values are instilled through contextual approaches, teacher role modeling, and integration across various subjects, facilitated by the flexible Merdeka curriculum. Additionally, Novanto et al. (2023) demonstrate that integrating social media into the PAI curriculum effectively educates students in digital civility, fosters dynamic interactions, and supports the application of ethical values in digital contexts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applied a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies used by Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers to promote religious moderation in the digital age. The research was conducted at a madrasah in Garut Regency, selected through purposive sampling because it possessed characteristics aligned with the study's focus: the use of digital technology in IRE teaching. The research activities were conducted over a three-month period, from June to August 2025.

The research informants comprised 10 PAI teachers, 20 students, and 2 madrasah heads, selected purposively to ensure representation of perspectives from the various parties directly involved in the learning process. Data collection was carried out using several techniques. Firstly, in-depth interviews with teachers, students, and madrasah heads to explore their experiences, views, and strategies applied in teaching religious moderation. Secondly, participatory observation of classroom learning activities and extracurricular activities related to the reinforcement of moderation values. Third, a documentary study of teaching materials such as Lesson Plans (RPP), madrasah policies, and digital learning resources used by PAI teachers.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three stages. The first stage, data reduction, involves selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data into relevant information. The second stage, data presentation, utilizes narratives, matrices, and tables to clarify the relationships among findings. The final stage, drawing conclusions and verification, entails formulating a valid interpretation based on the analyzed data.



To ensure data validity, the study applied source triangulation by comparing information from teachers, students, and the head of the madrasah. Methodological triangulation was also used, incorporating interviews, observation, and documentation. Additionally, member checking was conducted by seeking confirmation from informants regarding the preliminary research findings. These strategies were implemented to enhance the credibility of the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, various strategies applied by Islamic Education teachers to foster religious moderation among madrasah students in the digital age have been identified. These strategies are not solely focused on knowledge transfer but also emphasize the development of moderate attitudes and behaviors through role modelling, habit formation, and the use of information technology. In practice, each strategy has supporting factors that enhance its implementation and inhibiting factors that pose challenges in the field. Supporting factors included the availability of facilities, policy support, and teacher commitment, whilst inhibiting factors included low digital literacy, exposure to negative content, and a lack of role models in the students' environment. To provide a more systematic overview of the relationship between strategies, supporting factors, inhibiting factors, and their implications for learning, the results of this study are presented in the following table.

Table 1. An Analysis of Islamic Education Teachers' Strategies in the Implementation of Religious Moderation

Strategy	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors	Implications for Learning
Use of Social Media (WhatsApp, Instagram)	- Adequate IT facilities (stable internet connection, devices available) - Quick access to digital resources	- Low levels of digital literacy among some pupils - Exposure to negative content that is difficult to control	- There is a need for values-based digital literacy guidance to prevent the misuse of social media.
Contextual discussion-based learning	- Students' enthusiasm for discussing current issues - Teachers' support in facilitating dialogue	- A lack of skills among some pupils in engaging in polite dialogue - Differences in background that have the potential to trigger emotional debates	- Strengthening critical thinking and ethical dialogue should form part of the learning process.
Teachers as Role Models in demonstrating	- Teachers serving as moral role models	- A lack of role models for moderation within	- Leading by example is an effective means of internalizing values, but



Strategy	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors	Implications for Learning
moderation	- A culture of mutual respect within the school	the family and community	requires support from the wider community.
Integrating the value of moderation into lesson plans	- Curriculum policies that support character education - Teacher training on the integration of values	- Not all teachers consistently implement these measures	- This helps to systematize values education, but monitoring is required to ensure it is not merely a formality.

The findings of this study aligned with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' concept of religious moderation (2019), which highlighted the integration of moderation values into both formal and non-formal education. Employing digital media as a means to teach moderation represents a significant innovation in the digital era; however, addressing students' digital literacy remains an ongoing challenge. Teacher role modelling has emerged as the most effective strategy, as students are more likely to emulate observed behaviors than to accept theoretical instruction alone (Bandura, 1986). Incorporating the value of moderation in further educational plans, the educational objectives are clearly defined and measurable. The subsequent points warrant further discussion.

Strategies for Islamic Education Teachers

Use of Social Media

The use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram by Islamic Education teachers functions not only as a channel for disseminating information but also as a forum for educational interaction among teachers, pupils, and parents. For instance, one Islamic Education teacher shared a short video on religious moderation in a parents' WhatsApp group, which elicited a positive response and contributed to an enhanced understanding of tolerance. This observation supports the findings of Anwar, Leo, and Ruswandi (2022), that social media is effective in internalizing the value of religious moderation due to its broad reach, interactivity, and capacity to present content both visually and narratively. According to connectivism theory (Siemens, 2005), the use of social media establishes a learning network that facilitates the transfer of values across spatial and temporal boundaries.

Discussion-Based Learning

The contextual discussion approach has been shown to promote active student participation and enhance critical thinking skills. According to a PAI 2 teacher, engaging with current issues in the media encourages students to be more receptive to dialogue and fosters respect for diverse perspectives. Research conducted at Takalar High School further indicated that discussions centered on contemporary issues can improve critical



thinking and strengthen the value of tolerance. This approach is consistent with constructivist learning principles, which emphasize the development of understanding through social interaction and the exchange of viewpoints.

Teachers as Role Models

The exemplary conduct demonstrated by Islamic Education teachers in their daily lives serves as a significant model for imparting values. According to Islamic Education Teacher 8, mutual respect toward colleagues of different faiths constitutes an aspect of indirect learning for pupils. This observation aligns with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which posits that individuals acquire behavior by observing figures they consider significant. Such exemplary behavior exerts a more profound emotional and moral influence than verbal instruction alone.

Integrating the Value of Moderation into Lesson Plans

Integrating the values of tolerance and respect for diversity into lesson plans enhances the systematic and measurable nature of learning. The PAI 1 teacher indicated that each learning objective incorporates these values, ensuring continuity between planning and instructional practice. This approach is consistent with value-based education, which promotes the inclusion of values at every stage of learning, both within and beyond the formal curriculum.

Supporting factors

The implementation of the religious moderation strategy is supported by two primary factors:

1. Adequate IT facilities - Stable internet access and appropriate devices facilitate the integration of technology into instructional practices.
2. Teacher training - Enhancing digital literacy and religious moderation competencies equips educators with practical tools to manage technology-based instructional materials and values.

Inhibiting factors

Several significant challenges persist, including:

1. Limited digital literacy among pupils increases their vulnerability to extremist content.
2. Exposure to harmful content on social media platforms remains difficult to regulate.
3. The absence of role models for moderation within families and communities often results in schools serving as the primary source of examples of moderate behavior.

Integrative Analysis

The strategies employed by Islamic Education teachers in Garut Regency reflect a holistic approach that integrates digital, dialogic, and exemplary methods. This aligns with the findings of Anwar et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of synergy between digital media and values-based learning. To further improve effectiveness, it is necessary to strengthen digital literacy among both students and teachers. Teacher role modelling remains a central factor in shaping students' moderate character, as values-based learning



is more impactful through direct experience than through cognitive instruction alone. Additionally, the integration of values into lesson plans provides clear guidance and supports the ongoing process of internalizing religious moderation.

CONCLUSION

Islamic Education teachers at madrasahs in Garut Regency implement four primary strategies to promote religious moderation among students in the digital age: utilizing social media, employing discussion-based learning, modeling positive behavior, and incorporating moderation values into lesson plans. The effectiveness of these strategies depends on the availability of information technology facilities and teacher training. Major challenges include limited digital literacy, exposure to harmful online content, and insufficient positive role models within students' immediate environments.

Recommendation; 1) For Islamic Education Teachers: Promote digital literacy and creativity in producing engaging content on religious moderation. 2) For Madrasahs: Provide ongoing training and monitor the use of digital media. 3) For Future Researchers: Develop interactive technology-based learning models for religious moderation.

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