

Strategies for Islamic Religious Education in Countering Radicalism: An Analysis of the Integration of Religious Moderation Values into the Curriculum

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Abstract	
<p>This study aims to conduct an in-depth examination of the integration of religious moderation into the development of the Islamic religious education curriculum as a means of strengthening the learner profile. This study is grounded in the urgent need to foster a moderate religious character amidst the increasingly complex dynamics of social life. In an educational context, this strengthening is of paramount importance as a preventive measure to counter the emergence of radical ideologies and intolerant attitudes that have the potential to disrupt social harmony and national values. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using a literature review method. Data were collected by examining various relevant literature, then analysed critically and conceptually to produce a comprehensive and structured understanding. The research subsequently found that, although the curriculum has accommodated the values of religious moderation, its implementation in practice still faces various challenges. These constraints are primarily related to the limited competence of educators, as well as the availability and quality of teaching resources. Nevertheless, the values of religious moderation can be internalised in the daily lives of students through a holistic and collaborative approach to learning. Thus, learning does not merely remain within the cognitive realm, but also touches upon behaviour and affective aspects.</p>	<p>Keywords: Educational Strategy; Radicalism; Integration of Values; Religious Moderation.</p>

Abstrak	
<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam integrasi moderasi beragama dalam pengembangan kurikulum pada pendidikan agama Islam sebagai upaya untuk memperkuat profil pelajar. Kajian ini dilandasi oleh urgensi penguatan karakter keagamaan yang moderat di tengah dinamika kehidupan sosial yang makin kompleks. Dalam konteks pendidikan, penguatan ini menjadi sangat penting sebagai langkah preventif untuk merespons munculnya paham radikalisme dan sikap intoleransi yang berpotensi mengganggu harmoni serta nilai-nilai kebangsaan.</p>	<p>Kata Kunci: Strategi Pendidikan; Radikalisme; Integrasi Nilai; Moderasi Beragama.</p>

Penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif melalui metode studi pustaka. Data dikumpulkan dengan menelaah berbagai literatur yang relevan, kemudian dianalisis secara kritis dan konseptual untuk menghasilkan pemahaman yang menyeluruh dan terstruktur. Penelitian ini kemudian memperoleh hasil bahwa, meskipun kurikulum telah mengakomodasi nilai-nilai moderasi beragama, implementasinya di lapangan masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan. Kendala tersebut terutama berkaitan dengan keterbatasan kompetensi pendidik, ketersediaan dan kualitas sumber ajar. Namun demikian, nilai-nilai moderasi beragama dapat diinternalisasikan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari peserta didik melalui pendekatan pembelajaran yang holistik dan kolaboratif. Dengan demikian, pembelajaran tidak hanya berhenti pada ranah kognitif, tetapi juga menyentuh prilaku dan aspek kognitif.

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1. Introduction

Religious extremism has today become a global threat that has shown an upward trend over the past few years. This phenomenon not only affects religious stability at both national and international levels, but also has the potential to threaten the values of humanity and peace that form the foundation of our shared existence. Countries around the world are now facing increasingly complex challenges in responding to and countering this extremism (Budiman et al., 2024, p. 32). This complexity calls for a comprehensive and sustainable strategy, ensuring that prevention and management efforts are given top priority in the formulation of public policy.

In Indonesia, over the past decade, the issues of radicalism, intolerance and social polarisation amongst the younger generation have become a growing cause for serious concern. This phenomenon not only reflects complex social dynamics, but also highlights the challenges involved in fostering an inclusive and balanced approach to religious practice (Muafiq & Muali, 2025, p. 231).

A number of empirical findings, such as the results of a survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) and various international studies, indicate that young people still tend to adopt an exclusive attitude towards differences in belief. This situation underscores the importance of more systematic and sustained efforts to instil the values of tolerance, openness and moderation, particularly through the education system (Ibda et al., 2024, p. 1246).

In the context of Islamic education, research conducted by Abdul Rauf and Ahd Mujahid demonstrates that religious moderation is a key approach to fostering an inclusive and harmonious attitude towards religion. Religious moderation can be implemented through curriculum development and the delivery of teaching and learning processes, as well as a school culture that promotes values of tolerance and respect for diversity (Rauf & Mujahid, 2025). Furthermore, Muhammad Nur Adnan Saputra explains in his research that strengthening an

Islamic education curriculum based on moderation is an effective strategy in deradicalisation efforts. A curriculum that emphasises the values of balance and tolerance can serve as a bulwark against radical ideology within the educational environment (Nur et al., 2021, pp. 2–10).

Thus, in this study, the curriculum will be regarded as the primary instrument in education, which must be continually reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant to the dynamics of the times, scientific developments, and technological advancements, thereby safeguarding learners from ideologies that are at odds with the nation's ideology. Curriculum change is, in essence, inevitable, given that education is required to continually adapt to the needs and challenges of the future. This curriculum is designed to provide greater scope for the creation of diverse learning processes, encouraging the optimisation of the use of learning resources more effectively in today's modern era, thereby hopefully minimising the influence of radicalism within the school environment.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at analysing and gaining an in-depth understanding of, as well as elucidating, the integration of the values of religious moderation in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. The methods used are a literature review combined with content analysis, thereby enabling the production of findings that are contextual and relevant to current conditions. The data in this study is divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from literature such as articles, books and similar sources related to the main topic of discussion. Meanwhile, secondary data was derived from supporting sources that are relevant and can be synergised with the focus of the research study.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. *Islamic Religious Education in Countering Radicalism*

Islamic education plays a highly strategic role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually outstanding, but also possesses strength in spiritual, moral and social aspects. From this perspective, education is not merely understood as a process of knowledge transfer, but as a process of shaping a well-rounded and balanced personality. Amidst the increasingly complex currents of modernity and globalisation, Islamic education serves not only as a medium for imparting knowledge, but also plays a vital role in preserving and reinforcing ethical values among the younger generation.

As an educational system, Islam emphasises the importance of combining the pursuit of knowledge with the cultivation of noble character. The two are not treated as separate entities; rather, they complement one another in shaping individuals who are both knowledgeable and of good character. The aim of Islamic education is not merely to produce academically competent individuals, but also to enable them to internalise ethical and moral values in their daily lives amidst emerging crises such as moral crises, the degradation of character, and

the rise of radical ideologies that deviate from Islamic teachings (Hayani et al., 2021, p. 278).

By combining general knowledge with religious teachings, Islamic education fosters the development of individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also spiritually and socially mature. Such an approach will help shape individuals who are open-minded, tolerant and adaptable to global dynamics, without losing their Islamic identity.

In essence, Islam places great emphasis on moral and ethical principles as the cornerstone of life. Education from an Islamic perspective cannot be separated from the endeavour to foster noble character. Consequently, a moderate approach to religion can serve as a bulwark against the emergence of extremism or radicalism, which often stem from a narrow, literalist understanding of religion that fails to adequately address the social realities of society and the changing dynamics of the times (Nafsiyah & Wardan, 2024, p. 99).

3.2. *Religious Moderation as a Concept to Prevent Radicalism*

The emergence of various separatist movements invoking Islamic symbols has, in essence, had a detrimental impact, particularly on the perception of Islam as a religion that places tolerance and humanity at the heart of its principles. This phenomenon must therefore be examined critically, given that the use of religion to legitimise radical ideologies has the potential to cause widespread misunderstanding within society. Slogans cloaked in religious rhetoric are often exploited to justify actions that are, in fact, contrary to the very values of Islam itself.

It is important to reiterate that Islam, as the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad, has never taught intolerance or exclusivity. One historical piece of evidence demonstrating Islam's commitment to the values of peace and tolerance can be seen in the Constitution of Medina. This document served not merely as a political agreement, but also reflected an effort to build a harmonious social life amidst diversity; this became the foundation for the formation of a concept of a moderate religion, one that reflects an inclusive and compassionate attitude towards various groups (Ardiansyah & Basuki, 2023, p. 119).

Religious moderation can be understood as a concept that emphasises the importance of balance in understanding, practising and expressing religious teachings in daily life. This concept is not only oriented towards normative understanding, but also towards how religious values are manifested proportionately within social reality. Within this framework, religious moderation serves as a middle ground that guides religious communities in building a harmonious life. This approach fosters social relations grounded in mutual respect, tolerance, and an awareness of the importance of living side by side amidst religious diversity (Ningsih et al., 2024, p. 313).

This is in line with the concept of religious moderation education as put forward by Suryanto, who emphasises that religious moderation plays a strategic role in shaping inclusive and adaptable individuals amidst the complexities of diversity. This perspective demonstrates that education serves not only as a means of imparting knowledge, but also as a medium for fostering a more open minded and wise outlook. This shift in mindset reflects the success of a learning

process that is not solely focused on cognitive aspects, but also on the internalisation of universal values, such as tolerance and respect for differences (Suryanto, 2024, pp. 639–649).

From this perspective, education in religious moderation serves as a strategic tool for fostering a harmonious social consciousness. This is also in line with various research findings which confirm that reinforcing the values of moderation in education contributes significantly to shaping tolerant attitudes, particularly amongst students as part of the future intellectual generation. Moderation is not merely a normative concept, but also a social practice that reinforces the values of humanity and togetherness. In the context of a diverse society such as Indonesia, the role of religious moderation becomes increasingly relevant and strategic. Diversity encompassing differences in religion, culture, and social background demands a wise approach to addressing these differences. Through a moderate approach, religious communities are encouraged to develop an inclusive attitude, uphold universal human values, and prioritise interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

3.3. Strategies for Integrating the Value of Religious Moderation into the Curriculum

Education, by its very nature, cannot be separated from a fundamental component known as the curriculum. The curriculum serves not merely as a guide for the delivery of education, but also as a strategic framework for developing the full potential of learners. Through a curriculum that is systematically and contextually designed, education is expected to produce high-quality, adaptable graduates who are competitive on a global scale.

In this context, curriculum development has become a strategic priority, particularly in light of the competitive dynamics of today's industrialised economy. The Islamic education curriculum, in particular, is not only focused on academic mastery but is also designed to cultivate high-calibre human resources who possess integrity and a strong foundation in Islamic values.

The Islamic education curriculum must further accommodate the development of language skills as one of the key competencies in the era of globalisation. This ability serves as a means for graduates to interact, contribute and compete within a broader sphere. This is important, as it ensures that students are not only able to keep pace with change, but also retain an awareness of their own identity and the nation's cultural identity, which forms the foundation of life in society (Nugraha, 2016, pp. 13–14).

The integration of values of moderation cannot be achieved in isolation or by relying solely on schools. This endeavour requires an ecosystemic approach, in which the various elements of the educational environment are interconnected and play an active role. Whilst schools are indeed the primary setting for formal learning, the values of moderation will be more effectively instilled if reinforced by the family environment and supported by a conducive social community. Synergy between these three environments is key to shaping students who are moderate, inclusive, and capable of living harmoniously amidst diversity.

The principles of religious moderation in the curriculum are presented more explicitly, drawing upon the rich heritage of Islamic tradition. Principles such as

ta'addub (civility), *muwathonah* (citizenship), *taawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice), and *tawasuth* (the middle way) are positioned as the main foundations for the development of a moderate civic attitude. Furthermore, the values of *tasamuh* (tolerance) and *musawah* (equality) are also emphasised as integral parts of the ideal student character that is sought. The emphasis on these values demonstrates that the religious education curriculum is not solely oriented towards mastery of cognitive aspects or Islamic teaching materials. Rather, the curriculum is designed to shape the character of learners to be inclusive, fair, and capable of valuing diversity within religious and social life. Consequently, religious education serves not merely as a vehicle for imparting knowledge but also as a medium for the transformation of values relevant to the challenges faced by a diverse society (Aguslani, 2025, p. 113).

In the context of teaching methods, a dialogical and participatory approach has proven to be an effective means of instilling the values of religious moderation. A learning process that allows space for discussion, case studies and problem-solving not only encourages the active involvement of learners, but also opens up opportunities for them to develop a more critical, inclusive and open-minded way of thinking towards differences. Furthermore, the role of the teacher is a determining factor in the successful integration of the values of religious moderation into Islamic religious education. Teachers do not merely function as conveyors of material, but also as role models who reflect the values of moderation in their attitudes, use of language, and approach to diversity (Bustamam, 2025, pp. 69–70). Thus, the learning process does not merely take place at the cognitive level, but also touches upon the affective dimension and the development of the learners' character.

3.4. *Challenges and Solutions in Combating Radicalism through Education*

Radical ideologies generally stem from an inflexible attitude towards diversity, a tendency to impose one's will, and a refusal to allow space for dialogue. Such patterns not only narrow one's perspective but also have the potential to spark social conflict. In fact, in Islamic teachings, the resolution of issues is encouraged through a dialogical and tolerant approach that prioritises consultation. A hardline stance, particularly when accompanied by hostility towards differing views, is in direct contrast to the example set by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who demonstrated gentleness and wisdom. Islam emphasises the importance of conveying its teachings in a courteous and persuasive manner.

Furthermore, technological advancements and the widespread use of social media present new challenges. The rapid flow of information allows various ideologies, including radical ones, to spread widely via digital platforms. This, in turn, poses a challenge for students to adopt a critical and selective approach when receiving information. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions need to take on a strategic role by utilising technology wisely and adopting a humanistic and empathetic approach within the scope of Islamic education not only reflecting Islamic values themselves but also fostering a broader sense of inclusivity.

Islamic religious education delivered by teachers essentially occupies a highly strategic yet complex position, as it can act as a double edged sword. On

the one hand, it has the potential to be an effective tool in preventing the spread of radical ideology; on the other hand, if delivered using the wrong approach, it can actually serve as a gateway to the growth of narrow-minded and exclusive religious attitudes (Kadir, 2024, pp. 104–118).

The tendency towards radicalism is often rooted in an incomplete process of religious education, which places greater emphasis on textual aspects without balancing them with contextual understanding and the realities of contemporary society. In some educational practices, teaching methods are still found that promote a hardline, intolerant stance, and even narratives of revenge, which are fundamentally at odds with the essence of Islam's teachings of peace and compassion. This situation demonstrates that the quality and orientation of religious education are crucial in shaping the character of students.

Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping the character of young students so that they are not easily swayed by extremist teachings. This role is realised not only through the delivery of teaching materials in the classroom, but also through the example set by teachers, the cultivation of attitudes in daily life, and the creation of an inclusive and conducive learning environment. Religious education in this context is not merely a space for the transfer of knowledge, but also a forum for the ongoing formation of values and attitudes. With such an approach, Islamic religious education can function as a strategic instrument in preventing the spread of radicalism whilst maintaining social stability, particularly amongst students who are still in the adolescent stage of development. An educational process that emphasises a balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects enables students not merely to understand religious teachings at a conceptual level, but also to internalise and apply them in their daily lives (Halimah et al., 2025, p. 668).

Furthermore, through a curriculum that integrates the values of brotherhood, tolerance and respect for diversity, young people are guided to develop an open-minded attitude and critical thinking skills. This is particularly important amidst the flood of information, where not all information circulating aligns with moderate Islamic values. This commitment is realised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs through various policy programmes that promote the integration of values of moderation into the Islamic education curriculum as part of an effort to mainstream religious moderation (Khoir et al., 2025, p. 706). Armed with this knowledge, it is hoped that young learners will be able to filter information wisely and not be easily swayed by narratives that promote radical ideologies.

4. Conclusion

Radicalism in Islamic education is a serious issue that cannot be ignored, particularly in the context of Indonesia, which is characterised by a high degree of religious and cultural diversity. In reality, the phenomenon of radicalism often stems from a narrow and exclusionary religious worldview, leaving little room for differences. It is also not uncommon for such a mindset to be influenced by the influx of extremist ideologies that conflict with the fundamental values of peaceful and balanced religious coexistence.

In such circumstances, religious moderation becomes a crucial approach to be integrated into the practice of Islamic education, which teaches various values of wisdom in life. Values of balance, tolerance, and openness to diversity are not merely relevant at a conceptual level, but also play a significant role in shaping a more inclusive religious outlook among students. Through the reinforcement of these values, Islamic education is expected to become a learning environment that functions not only as a means of knowledge transfer, but also as a vehicle for fostering a wise attitude towards diversity.

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