

Internalization Strategy of Religious Moderation Values in Indonesian Language Subject in Senior High School

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Abstract

This study examines the strategies for internalizing the values of religious moderation within Indonesian language instruction in schools. Religious moderation—emphasizing tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity—is highly relevant to students' character formation in Indonesia's pluralistic society. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and classroom observations at SMA Cordova Bandung using a qualitative approach. The findings reveal that Indonesian language teachers utilize interactive lectures, group discussions, contextual learning, and project-based learning methods to embed religious moderation values. Some students experience difficulty in fully grasping the concept of religious moderation. The study concludes that integrating religious moderation into Indonesian language learning can effectively contribute to character building when approached through contextual and life-based pedagogy.

Keywords: religious moderation, Indonesian language, character building, tolerance

Strategi Internalisasi Nilai-nilai Moderasi Beragama dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di SMA

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi internalisasi nilai-nilai moderasi beragama dalam pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia di sekolah. Moderasi beragama yang menekankan toleransi, keseimbangan, dan penghormatan terhadap keberagaman sangat relevan dengan pembentukan karakter siswa dalam masyarakat Indonesia yang pluralistik. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi kelas di SMA Cordova Bandung dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa guru bahasa Indonesia memanfaatkan metode ceramah interaktif, diskusi kelompok, pembelajaran kontekstual, dan pembelajaran berbasis proyek untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa mengintegrasikan moderasi beragama ke dalam pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia dapat secara efektif memberikan kontribusi terhadap pendidikan karakter jika didekati melalui pedagogi kontekstual dan berbasis kehidupan.

Kata kunci: moderasi beragama, bahasa Indonesia, pendidikan karakter, toleransi

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A. Introduction

Religious moderation is vital in Indonesia, preserving harmony and unity within its multicultural and multi-religious society. As a nation characterized by megadiversity, Indonesia requires strategic and prudent mechanisms to sustain social cohesion—one of which is the promotion of religious moderation. Religious moderation is an attitude that emphasizes tolerance, balance, and respect for differences in personal conduct and within the broader social context¹. This concept aligns closely with the objectives of the national education system, which aims not only to foster intellectual development but also to shape students' character. Cultivating a moderate character through education is essential for developing a generation that values diversity and actively contributes to social harmony. Setinawi revealed that education serves as a fundamental vehicle for embedding the values of religious moderation², as it provides students with academic knowledge and the attitudes and values necessary for meaningful participation in communal life. In line with this, the Indonesian government has undertaken efforts to integrate the values of religious moderation, including in the Indonesian language materials.

The Indonesian language subject is one of the compulsory subjects in elementary and secondary education units.³ This subject has great potential to be a forum for internalizing the values of religious moderation. When they learn Indonesian, they learn to read and write and can think deeply and discuss various ideas. As Hamidah & Duncik have stated, language is an effective tool for conveying ideas, understanding, and values, including religious values.⁴ The teaching strategies applied in the Indonesian language subject can be directed to

¹ Akhmad Munir Mufti and Aminullah Elhady, "INTERNALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION VALUES: ACTIVE TOLERANCE AND SOCIAL HARMONY IN EDUCATION IN INDONESIA," *EL_tarbawi*: 16, no. 1 (2023): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.20885/tarbawi.vol16.iss1.art1>; Ahmad Kusjairi Suhail et al., "Azyurmardi Azra dan Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia," *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan dan Kemasyarakatan* 19, no. 2 (March 18, 2024): 737, <https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v19i2.4179>.

² Setinawati et al., "The Framework of Religious Moderation: A Socio-Theological Study on the Role of Religion and Culture from Indonesia's Perspective," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 11 (January 1, 2024): 101271, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101271>.

³ P. W. J. Nababan, "Language in Education: The Case of Indonesia," *International Review of Education* 37, no. 1 (March 1, 1991): 115–31, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00598171>.

⁴ Hamidah and Masyhur Duncik, "The Impact of Local Language on Public Understanding of Religious Messages," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 9 (January 1, 2024): 100882, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100882>.

integrate the values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, respect for differences, and a balanced attitude in everyday life.

In practice, efforts to internalize the values of religious moderation through Indonesian language instruction at the senior high school level have not yet reached optimal implementation. Educators often prioritize cognitive aspects, such as grammar and literal text comprehension, while affective dimensions—particularly character development and the cultivation of moral values and religious moderation—are frequently overlooked. Indonesian language instruction offers significant potential for integrating values of religious moderation, which are highly relevant to students' experiences within a pluralistic and multicultural society. However, many teachers lack a comprehensive understanding of spiritual moderation and the pedagogical strategies necessary for its integration into the learning process. This shortcoming can be attributed, in part, to the limited availability of professional development programs specifically targeting Indonesian language teachers and the absence of clear guidelines for embedding the principles of religious moderation in classroom practice. Consequently, the intended educational goals of character and value formation are often not fully achieved.⁵

Another challenge in implementing religious moderation values in schools, as expressed by Suyudi and Putra⁶, is the lack of teaching materials that specifically discuss religious moderation in educational units. The results of a study by Hanif et al. showed that teachers often have difficulty finding the right sources to explain the concepts of religious moderation.⁷ Therefore, it is a challenge for teachers to develop materials and use teaching methods that are contextual and based on students' daily lives. In addition, the limited time allocated for the subject is also an

⁵ Muhammad Idris and Alven Putra, "The Roles of Islamic Educational Institutions in Religious Moderation," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (June 9, 2021): 25, <https://doi.org/10.29240/ajis.v6i1.2555>; Mujizatullah, "The Role of The Galesong Observant Forum in Strengthening Religious Moderation in Takalar District," *Al-Ulum* 22, no. 1 (June 1, 2022): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v22i1.2742>.

⁶ M. Suyudi and Wahyu Hanafi Putra, "Implementation of Islamic Education Based on Religious Moderation Through Tri Dharma Activities at Islamic Religious College," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 14, no. 1 (April 20, 2022): 189–202, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i1.1553>.

⁷ Abdullah Hanif, Encep Syarifudin, and Ali Muhtarom, "INTEGRATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 01 (February 28, 2024): 49–66, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v14i01.7767>.

obstacle in its efforts to internalize the values of religious moderation. Nugroho (2020) highlighted that Indonesian language lessons are often burdened with a dense curriculum, so integrating religious moderation values requires creativity from Indonesian language teachers in utilizing the available time. Indonesian language teachers must be able to combine teaching language skills with teaching the values of religious moderation without sacrificing one aspect, and this is a challenge in itself.

Several previous studies have discussed the importance of religious moderation in education, but few have specifically highlighted its implementation in Indonesian language subjects. Zaluchu, for instance, observed how the influence of religious moderation can help students better understand and accept others.⁸ His study showed that students who learned to be moderate were more tolerant and better at accepting differences. This finding suggests that education can help children grow into good and respectful individuals, reducing extreme attitudes—another study conducted by Imamah on integrating religious moderation in religious education in schools.⁹ The study's findings stated that religious moderation can be implemented through various school learning methods, such as discussions and case analysis. The study also emphasized the importance of dialogue between religions to instil moderate values among students.

Previous research above shows the importance of internalizing religious moderation in various school subjects, including Indonesian language lessons. At the same time, the research conducted by the researcher is more on exploring the strategies teachers use in instilling the values of religious moderation so that students are not only good at cognitive aspects but also have moderate and tolerant characters.

⁸ Sonny Eli Zaluchu, Priyantoro Widodo, and Agus Kriswanto, "Conceptual Reconstruction of Religious Moderation in the Indonesian Context Based on Previous Research: Bibliometric Analysis," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 11 (January 1, 2024): 101552, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101552>.

⁹ Yuli Habibatul Imamah, "Integration of Religious Moderation in Developing an Islamic Religious Education Curriculum," *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme* 5, no. 3 (October 2, 2023): 573–89, <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v5i3.3841>.

Teachers must pay attention to the fact that high school students are in a very critical phase of development¹⁰, where they begin to form their self-identity, including in terms of attitudes and views on religion. If the values of religious moderation are not instilled early on, students may become vulnerable to negative influences, such as radicalism or intolerance. Therefore, schools, especially through the Indonesian language subject, must be one of the pillars in building moderate character among students.

This study aims to analyze the internalization strategy of religious moderation values in Indonesian language learning in schools. This study focuses on how Indonesian language teachers at SMA Cordova Bandung integrate religious moderation values into their teaching and the challenges faced in the process. This study is expected to contribute to developing effective teaching strategies to shape students' moderate character through a contextual approach based on everyday life.

Based on the background above, this study aims to analyze the internalization strategy of religious moderation values in Indonesian language learning in schools. It focuses on how Indonesian language teachers at SMA Cordova Bandung integrate diverse moderation values in their teaching and the challenges faced in the process. This study is expected to contribute to the development of effective teaching strategies for shaping students' moderate character through a contextual approach based on everyday life.

B. Method

This study uses a descriptive-qualitative approach to analyze the internalization strategy of religious moderation values in learning Indonesian language subjects in high school. This approach was chosen to reveal the methods, strategies, and challenges teachers face and to understand students' responses to integrating these values. The type of research used is a case study because it allows

¹⁰ Jingjing Xu et al., "The Effect of the Continuation Task on Senior High School Students' Critical Thinking in EFL Writing Using Interactive Alignment Theory," *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 56 (June 1, 2024): 101784, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2024.101784>.

researchers to conduct in-depth explorations of teacher-teaching practices and student responses in authentic contexts.

The research subjects consisted of (1) Indonesian language teachers who teach in high schools who try to internalize the values of religious moderation in their teaching, (2) high school students who are learners in Indonesian language classes, and (3) high school principals as additional informants regarding school policies on internalizing religious moderation.

Adapting Creswell's framework, the data collection techniques are interviews, observations, and documentation studies.¹¹ In-depth interviews with Indonesian language teachers to obtain information related to the learning methods used in internalizing the values of religious moderation, exploring how they choose and use teaching materials that support the internalization of religious moderation, and the challenges they face in implementing religious moderation in Indonesian language subjects. Interviews were also conducted with students to determine their responses to Indonesian language learning integrated with the values of religious moderation. Meanwhile, observations were conducted during the Indonesian language learning process in class. The focus of the observation was to see directly how the teaching methods used by teachers and how teaching materials were selected and delivered to internalize the values of religious moderation. Observations aimed to see the interaction between teachers and students and to understand the challenges that emerged in the learning process. Documentation studies were conducted to study various learning-related documents, such as the Learning Implementation Plan (Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran: RPP) or Teaching Module (Modul Ajar: MA) documents used by Indonesian language teachers.

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis, with the following steps: 1) Transcript of interview and observation data, 2) Data coding to identify emerging themes related to teaching methods, teaching materials, challenges, student responses, and the impact of learning on student attitudes, 3) Categorization of these themes to provide a clear picture of existing patterns. 4) Conclusion of analysis results to answer research questions.

¹¹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, vol. 10 (London: SAGE, 2003).

C. Results and Discussion

Based on the observations and interviews, teachers have implemented several learning methods to internalize the values of religious moderation in Indonesian language subjects.

a. Interactive Teaching Method

The interactive teaching method is used as one of the strategies for internalizing the values of religious moderation. Using this method, teachers deliver Indonesian language learning materials monologue and involve students through questions and answers and short discussions. With this method, teachers can insert the values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation between religious communities, into the learning process. Interactive lectures provide teachers with concrete, real-life examples that can link learning materials with religious moderation. For example, when learning expository texts, teachers provide examples of texts discussing the harmony between religious communities. In the learning process, they invite students to discuss and explore the meaning of moderation implied in the text. In the discussion, the teacher is a facilitator who directs students to understand the importance of a moderate attitude in everyday life.

b. Group Discussion Method

In addition to interactive lectures, other methods are used, namely group discussions, to promote the values of religious moderation. In its implementation, students are divided into several small groups; they analyze specific texts or cases related to the diversity of Indonesian society, and each group discusses a different theme. For example, groups 1 and 2 discuss the theme "Respecting Differences in Cultural Diversity". The teacher asks a trigger question as material for discussion. "How can we appreciate and celebrate cultural differences in our environment"? Groups 3 and 4 discuss "The Role of Tolerance in Interfaith Relations". The teacher asks a trigger question as a discussion guide. "To what extent does a tolerant attitude in religion contribute positively to creating harmonious relationships between religious adherents"? Groups 5 and 6 discuss "Deliberation as a Means of

Conflict Resolution." The teacher asks the following trigger questions as a discussion guide. "How can deliberation be used as a method to resolve conflicts in the school or community environment"? While groups 7 and 8 discuss the theme "Violence and Social Media: Influence and Solutions." The teacher poses the following trigger question as a discussion guide. "To what extent does social media contribute to increasing violence in society and how can it be addressed?" Each group then presents the results of their discussion in front of the class and reflects together.

Using this discussion method improves students' understanding of religious moderation and allows them to develop critical thinking and communication skills. Group discussions encourage students to interact and collaborate with friends from different backgrounds, indirectly teaching them the importance of being tolerant and inclusive. It is in line with the constructivist learning theory by Jean Piaget and Vygotsky.¹² According to this theory, students build knowledge through active interaction with their environment.¹³ In learning Indonesian, which focuses on internalizing the values of religious moderation, group discussion methods, contextual learning, and project-based learning support the principle of constructivism because students are actively involved in the learning process and build their understanding of religious moderation. Learning does not only occur actively but also through critical reflection, social interaction, and application of values in real-life situations. Vygotsky also emphasized the importance of social interaction in learning by using group discussion methods. In group discussions, students learn from each other and share different views and experiences, enriching their understanding of religious moderation. It reinforces the theory that learning is a social process involving cooperation and collaboration.

¹² Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, vol. 86 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard university press, 1978).

¹³ Tri Wintolo Apoko and Budi Waluyo, "Social Media for English Language Acquisition in Indonesian Higher Education: Constructivism and Connectivism Frameworks," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 11 (January 1, 2024): 101382, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101382>.

c. Contextual Teaching and Learning

Contextual Teaching and Learning emerged as one of the learning methods considered adequate in internalizing the values of religious moderation. In its implementation, teachers connect the subject matter with real situations and conditions experienced by students in their environment. One of the topics chosen is "Religious Harmony in the Surrounding Community." The teacher asks students to conduct observations or interviews with people in their environment about how they maintain interfaith relationships. The results of the observations are then described in the form of narrative text or reports, which are presented in class.

The Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach encourages greater student engagement by highlighting the relevance of learning materials to real-life experiences.¹⁴ This method enables students to connect the values of religious moderation with their daily lives, fostering a more profound understanding and personal meaning. CTL facilitates bridging theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom with practical experiences encountered in social contexts. As a result, students can comprehend the concept of religious moderation in abstract terms and internalize it through their everyday social interactions. This alignment supports the development of moderate attitudes and contributes to achieving holistic educational objectives. According to Johnson, CTL emphasizes that learning becomes more meaningful when students relate academic content to real-world experiences.¹⁵ In this regard, integrating religious moderation values is more effective when students can perceive a clear connection between these values and the social environments they navigate. Thus, CTL serves as a strategic pedagogical framework for promoting the internalization of religious moderation within the educational setting.

¹⁴ Ardi Satrial et al., "Advancing Educational Practice: Implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning Model in Islamic Education," *International Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education* 3, no. 1 (March 28, 2024): 50–64, <https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v3i1.200>.

¹⁵ Elaine B. Johnson, *Contextual Teaching and Learning: What It Is and Why It's Here to Stay* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002).

d. Project-Based Learning Method

Furthermore, project-based learning is the learning method used in internalizing the values of religious moderation. In practice, in the PjBL method of instilling the values of religious moderation, students are asked to work in teams and complete projects related to the theme of religious moderation. The project chosen is the anti-violence "Peace Campaign: Facing Religious-Based Violence." This project aims to educate students about the need to reject various forms of violence in the name of religion and get used to promoting peace and dialogue as alternative solutions.

The PjB method allows students to learn collaboratively and creatively while strengthening their understanding of the importance of being moderate in religion. It is also in line with the goals of character education that prioritize the development of 21st-century skills, such as the ability to work in teams, think critically, and manage projects independently.

The use of the PjBL method in internalising the values of religious moderation is also by the principles of PjBL put forward by Thomas Markham, that PjBL is a learning method that focuses on solving real problems through projects designed to motivate students to be actively involved.¹⁶ PjBL encourages students to think critically, work together, and develop practical skills that can be applied outside the classroom. In the context of internalising the values of religious moderation, PjBL allows students to apply the concept of moderation in real projects, such as literacy campaigns.

The selection and use of teaching materials are essential components in the learning process that determine the quality and effectiveness of the learning itself. The following is a presentation of data on teaching materials selected and used by Indonesian language teachers.

e. Use of Religious Moderation-Based Argumentation Text.

The teaching materials chosen to internalize the values of religious moderation in learning Indonesian at SMA Cordova are argumentative texts that

¹⁶ Thom Markham, John Larmer, and Jason Ravitz, *Project Based Learning Handbook: A Guide to Standards-Focused Project Based Learning for Middle and High School Teachers* (Buck Institute for Education, 2003).

focus on harmony and religious moderation. Argumentative texts are chosen because they train students to think critically, provide logical arguments, and strengthen their ability to analyze various views in society regarding sensitive issues, such as differences in religion and belief.

One of the selected texts is "The Role of Religious Moderation in Building Interfaith Harmony in Indonesia." The message in this text encourages students to understand that moderation is not an extreme attitude or fanaticism but rather a balanced approach (*tawasuth*) in religion. The teacher asks students to 'dissect' the arguments in the text, compare them with their experiences, and present their views on the importance of moderation in everyday life. The use of this argumentative text is to the needs of high school students who are at the cognitive development stage, where they begin to build critical and reflective thinking skills, by the cognitive development theory developed by Jean Piaget about the formal operational stage¹⁷, where high school students are at an age that allows them to think abstractly and consider various perspectives.

f. Use of Short Stories and Poems with Content of Religious Moderation

Short stories and poems containing various moderation messages were also chosen as the open materials. These texts are very effective as open materials for learning Indonesian. Short stories, as a form of narrative, often convey moral messages and human values subtly so that students can emotionally connect with the characters in the story and internalize the message of moderation without feeling lectured. One of the short stories used in this study is "*beda tapi sama*, different but equal," which tells the story of a friendship between two teenagers from different religious backgrounds. The teacher invites students to resolve the conflicts in the story and how the characters solve problems through dialogue and mutual respect. In addition, poems that raise the theme of peace and harmony are also used to arouse students' feelings, deepening their understanding of the importance of moderation in interfaith interactions.

¹⁷ Jean Piaget, *To Understand Is to Invent: The Future of Education* (New York: Penguin Books, 1973).

One of the poems chosen is “*Kita Bukan Jubah, We are not robes*” by Emha Ainun Nadjib (Cak Nun). This poem emphasises the importance of mutual respect, maintaining harmony amidst religious differences, and rejecting fanaticism and extremism.¹⁸ With meaningful yet straightforward language, Cak Nun describes how humans should not be trapped in religious symbols or narrow identities but prioritize universal values such as love, peace, and humanity. This poem is often used as a reflection of spiritual moderation and peace.

Short stories and poems refer to the theory of character education put forward by Thomas Lickona (1991). He stated that narratives or stories are powerful tools for instilling moral values in students because stories can stimulate imagination and empathy.¹⁹ In addition, through poetry, students are invited to feel the symbolic meanings contained in language that deepen their reflection on the values of humanity and religious moderation.

g. Use of News Articles on Religious Diversity in Indonesia

News articles discussing religious diversity in Indonesia are also relevant and contextual teaching materials to internalize the value of religious moderation. In this study, teachers used articles from the mass media that discussed tolerance issues, government policies related to religious harmony, and real cases that showed challenges and solutions in maintaining harmonious relations between religious communities in Indonesia. One of the articles discussed celebrating different religious holidays in a big city in Indonesia, where various religious communities helped each other and collaborated to celebrate diversity. Based on the article, students were asked to analyze how religious moderation is applied in society and then write an argumentative essay about the importance of tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

The use of this news article is related to the contextual learning theory proposed by Elaine B. Johnson. According to Johnson, learning will be more

¹⁸ Sujiono Sujiono, “Penerapan Pendekatan Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Menulis Puisi Buddhis (Penelitian Tindakan di SMB Dhamma Sasana Wonogiri),” *Dhammavicaya: Jurnal Pengkajian Dhamma* 3, no. 1 (July 22, 2019): 28–42, <https://doi.org/10.47861/dv.v3i1.10>.

¹⁹ Thomas Lickona, “Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education,” *Journal of Moral Education* 25, no. 1 (March 1, 1996): 93–100, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305724960250110>.

effective if students can relate what they learn to real-life contexts.²⁰ By using news relevant to the social situations around them, students can see the direct relevance of the values of religious moderation to their own lives, strengthening their understanding of moderation's importance.

In the context of learning religious moderation through argumentative texts, short stories, poems, and news articles, Jean Piaget's constructivism theory is very relevant. Piaget emphasized that students construct knowledge through active interaction with the subject matter and their environment. Using teaching materials that challenge students to think critically and reflectively, such as argumentative texts and short stories, students are encouraged to construct a personal understanding of the importance of religious moderation. They not only receive information passively but are also involved in discovering meaning and interpretation according to their stages of cognitive development.

In his theory of character education, Thomas Lickona emphasizes that one effective way to instil moral values in students is through narratives or stories.²¹ Short stories and poems, in this case, serve as powerful tools to convey messages of religious moderation in a more emotional and personal way. Through the characters in the short stories and the symbolism in the poems, students can internalize values such as tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences, which are the essence of religious moderation.

Elaine B. Johnson states that CTL helps students to understand the subject matter more deeply by relating it to their real experiences. The use of news articles discussing religious diversity in Indonesia is an example of applying this theory. News articles provide real context about issues of religious moderation, allowing students to see how these values are applied in everyday life. Thus, students learn theoretically and understand how religious moderation impacts the society around them.

Integrating the values of religious moderation in Indonesian language learning does not mean that there are no obstacles, but all of these obstacles are

²⁰ Johnson, *Contextual Teaching and Learning*.

²¹ Lickona, "Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education."

challenges that must be overcome. Based on the results of interviews with Indonesian language teachers at Cordova High School, several main challenges emerged in integrating the values of religious moderation into learning. The most dominant challenge is the limited time to deliver the material because the time is relatively limited. At the same time, they face a dense and diverse curriculum, which includes aspects of language, literature, and language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. With extensive material, teachers find it difficult to allocate sufficient time to explore the values of religious moderation without reducing the portion of time for other materials that are considered essential. According to Clark & Peterson (1986), one of the obstacles to learning is the limited allocation of time, which often requires teachers to prioritize the material.²²

In addition to time constraints, the abstraction of religious moderation is the second challenge. Some students have difficulty understanding the abstract concept of religious moderation, especially if these values are not directly related to their daily lives. Religious moderation is often considered too theoretical and less relevant if concrete examples related to the local context and students' personal experiences are not given. According to Piaget, high school students are at the formal operational stage, where they begin to be able to think abstractly but still need concrete and relevant help to understand more complex concepts truly.

The third challenge faced is the lack of teaching materials explicitly teaching religious moderation. The existing curriculum focuses more on language aspects and communication skills, so teachers need to make adjustments or adaptations to integrate the values of religious moderation into the teaching materials. Teachers often have to find additional sources or create materials that are appropriate to the context of religious moderation. It requires extra effort from teachers in terms of time and creativity when compiling teaching materials. The constructivist learning theory proposed by Schunk and DiBenedetto emphasizes the importance of teachers as facilitators who can link material to students' social and cultural

²² M. C. Wittrock, "The Cognitive Movement in Instruction*," *Educational Psychologist* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 1978): 15-29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461527809529192>.

contexts.²³ Still, in reality, without the support of appropriate teaching materials, this effort becomes more challenging to do.

To overcome the above challenges, better support is needed in developing teaching materials that specifically emphasize the values of religious moderation and training teachers to relate these values to the local context of students. In addition, a contextual learning approach can also be implemented, where teachers can utilize real situations experienced by students every day to explain abstract concepts such as religious moderation.²⁴ Thus, this concept no longer feels far from the reality of students but becomes an integral part of their daily lives.

Students generally responded positively to integrating religious moderation values in Indonesian language lessons. After participating in the learning, many students showed a better understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect for differences. However, some students admitted that they had difficulty understanding the concept of moderation in religion, especially those from a homogeneous social environment. Class discussions and writing projects were considered effective in helping students internalize these values.

The various responses of students to Indonesian language learning that integrates religious moderation values can be analyzed from the perspective of educational theory and character development. Based on the theory of constructivist education and value-based learning, student responses involving understanding, reflection, attitudes, and participation result from their active involvement in the learning process that emphasises real experiences and social relevance. Several theories can help us understand this phenomenon. Here are some student responses to Indonesian language learning that integrate religious moderation values.

Students begin to understand the importance of tolerance in everyday life better. They can see the values of religious moderation, such as mutual respect, tolerance, and maintaining harmony. Learning that integrates the values of

²³ Dale H. Schunk and Maria K. DiBenedetto, "Learning from a Social Cognitive Theory Perspective," in *International Encyclopedia of Education (Fourth Edition)*, ed. Robert J Tierney, Fazal Rizvi, and Kadriye Ercikan (Oxford: Elsevier, 2023), 22–35, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-818630-5.14004-7>.

²⁴ Johnson, *Contextual Teaching and Learning*.

tolerance and religious moderation facilitates students in understanding the vital role of mutual respect in a multicultural society. According to Piaget (1973), students at the formal operational stage begin to be able to think more abstractly and consider different perspectives. This process is in line with the moral development outlined by Kohlberg, where students begin to develop a deeper understanding of the principles of justice and appreciate differences in their social environment.²⁵ With religious moderation learning, students are better able to understand tolerance as part of everyday life.

Students feel encouraged to think more critically. They begin to assess the situation in society related to religious diversity and seek ways in which religious conflicts can be resolved peacefully through dialogue and good communication. This response is related to Paulo Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy theory, which emphasizes the importance of learning as a means to free students from ignorance and social injustice.²⁶ By encouraging students to think critically about social life and issues of religious diversity, religious moderation learning helps students build critical awareness (conscientization), namely the ability to understand and challenge injustices that exist in society. It strengthens students' ability to become active participants in creating a more peaceful and tolerant society.

They become more aware of respecting differences and showing empathy towards others. The development of empathy and social awareness that emerges from learning religious moderation can be explained through the theory of emotional intelligence proposed by Daniel Goleman.²⁷ In this context, empathy is considered a primary ability that allows individuals to understand and feel the feelings of others from different backgrounds. The development of empathy is also in line with social-emotional learning, which teaches students to develop social, emotional, and ethical skills, including in the context of diversity.

²⁵ Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development/the Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice. 1 1*, vol. 77 (New York: Harper & Row., 1981).

²⁶ Peter Pericles Trifonas, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 50 Years," *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 40, no. 5 (October 20, 2018): 367–70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2019.1570789>.

²⁷ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence. Why It Can Matter More than IQ.*, vol. 24 (New York: Bantam Books., 1996).

The students demonstrated active engagement through their participation in classroom discussions, particularly on topics such as tolerance and social harmony. They confidently articulated their perspectives and shared personal experiences concerning intergroup interactions. This phenomenon can be interpreted through Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which underscores the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Within this framework, classroom discussions on religious moderation function as a scaffolded learning environment wherein teachers and peers contribute to gradually developing students' conceptual understanding. Such interactions facilitate cognitive development and promote internalising values associated with religious tolerance and coexistence.

Students exhibit a noticeable shift in attitude, becoming more open to differences and increasingly capable of applying the principles of religious moderation in their daily interactions. This transformation enables them to act as change agents within their school and family environments. Integrating religious moderation values into the learning process is critical in character development. As Lickona (1991) noted, character education involves a pedagogical approach that fosters moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect, inherently encompassing openness and tolerance toward diversity.²⁸ The students' enhanced receptiveness to differences reflects the successful internalization of religious moderation, evident in their behaviour and interpersonal relationships.

Students can demonstrate meaningful responses by connecting Indonesian language learning materials with the social realities they encounter or observe. For instance, when assigned to write essays or create literary works embodying moderation values, students can produce outputs that resonate with real-life contexts. Such responses indicate the development of reflective and creative thinking skills. It aligns with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which posits that effective learning occurs when learners integrate academic content with

²⁸ Lickona, "Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education."

concrete experiences beyond the classroom.²⁹ Through composing essays or literary texts that incorporate themes of moderation, students not only enhance their linguistic competencies but also internalize the values of moderation as applied in their everyday lives.

Some students feel confused or have difficulty understanding the concept of religious moderation, especially if they come from a very homogeneous background. Teachers provide more in-depth explanations and use a more inclusive approach in this situation. The confusion experienced by students in understanding religious moderation, especially for those from a homogeneous background, can be understood through the theory of cognitive dissonance proposed by Festinger (1957).³⁰ Dissonance occurs when students face new information or experiences contradicting their beliefs or understandings. In this case, teachers need to help students bridge the gap between their beliefs and the values of religious moderation through more in-depth explanations and relevant contextualization.

Students' responses to Indonesian language learning that integrates religious moderation values significantly impact the development of their understanding, attitudes, and social skills. Students successfully improved their understanding of tolerance and the importance of respecting differences and were able to reflect on social conditions more critically. This learning also facilitated the development of empathy and social awareness and encouraged active participation in class discussions. However, the challenges faced, especially for students from homogeneous backgrounds who experience confusion in understanding the concept of religious moderation, require special attention from teachers. Applying religious moderation values contributes to forming a more open character and allows students to relate the subject matter to the social reality they experience. Thus, integrating religious moderation values in Indonesian language learning can effectively build a more tolerant and peaceful society.

Indonesian language teachers adopt a variety of pedagogical strategies to instil the values of religious moderation—namely tolerance, balance, and respect for differences. These strategies include interactive lectures, group discussions,

²⁹ Russ Vince, "Reflections on 'Behind and Beyond Kolb's Learning Cycle,'" *Journal of Management Education* 46, no. 6 (December 1, 2022): 983–89, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10525629221114040>.

³⁰ Elliot Aronson, "The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance: A Current Perspective" This Article and All the Original Work Reported in It Were Supported by a Grant from the National Science Foundation., in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, ed. Leonard Berkowitz, vol. 4 (Academic Press, 1969), 1–34, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60075-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60075-1).

contextual learning, and project-based learning. Each method is implemented with specific activities and materials that reflect everyday issues relevant to students' lives. The integration of religious moderation is made visible through teacher-student interactions, discussion themes, and student projects that emphasize acceptance of diversity and peaceful coexistence. The following table outlines the characteristics of each teaching method in practice:

Table 1:
Implementation of teaching the Indonesian language method
for religious moderation

Teaching Methode	Implementation in the classroom	Moderation values emphasized	Learning materials used
Interactive Lecture	Teachers deliver explanations with real-life examples involving religious tolerance and pluralism.	Tolerance, respect for diversity	News articles, current events, narrative texts
Group discussion	Students discuss controversial or sensitive topics (e.g., interfaith harmony) in small groups.	Dialogue, empathy, mutual understanding	Argumentative texts, poems
Contextual teaching and learning	Teachers relate lesson content to students' daily lives and local community experiences.	Relevance, balance, respect for cultural differences	Short stories, reflective essays
Project-Based Learning	Students create projects (e.g., posters, presentations, or digital stories) promoting religious harmony.	Collaboration, critical thinking, peacebuilding	Multimedia sources, student-created materials

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the internalization of religious moderation values in Indonesian language instruction can be effectively implemented through various pedagogical strategies. The findings indicate that Indonesian language teachers employ interactive lectures, group discussions, contextual learning, and project-based learning approaches to instil the principles of religious moderation. Argumentative texts, articles, poems, and short stories are the selected materials supporting this integration. However, teachers face several challenges, including limited instructional resources that explicitly address religious moderation and instructional time constraints. Despite these challenges, students generally respond positively to incorporating religious moderation values, although some still struggle to grasp the concept entirely. Overall, the integration of these values is well-received by students at Cordova High School. Therefore, Indonesian language education can be vital in fostering students' moderate attitudes through instructional approaches grounded in real-life contexts and aligned with their social environment.

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