

Analysis of the Understanding and Implementation of Religious Moderation in Madrasah Teachers: A Mixed Methods Study at MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri

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ABSTRACT

This study examines teachers' understanding and implementation of religious moderation in Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Sejahtera Pare Kediri. Although previous research has widely discussed intolerance and radical tendencies in Indonesian schools, limited studies have explored how teachers in specific madrasah contexts internalize and apply the principles of religious moderation in daily pedagogical practice. This study addresses that gap by assessing both the conceptual grasp and practical enactment of moderation among teachers. A mixed-methods sequential explanatory design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 15 teachers using a 20-item Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics using SPSS 26. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that all teachers demonstrate a very high level of understanding and practice of religious moderation. Three key results emerge. First, teachers consistently integrate moderation values such as tolerance, justice, and balance into learning activities and social interactions. Second, national commitment, interfaith cooperation, and anti-violent attitudes are strongly reflected in their responses. Third, institutional culture and leadership support significantly reinforce the sustainability of moderation practices. These findings indicate that MA Sejahtera has successfully cultivated a moderate educational climate. The study concludes that strengthening teacher competence and institutional support is essential for sustaining moderation initiatives and recommends further research across diverse madrasah settings to validate these patterns.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pemahaman dan implementasi moderasi beragama pada guru di Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Sejahtera Pare Kediri. Meskipun berbagai studi sebelumnya telah membahas intoleransi dan kecenderungan radikal di sekolah-sekolah Indonesia, masih sedikit penelitian yang menelaah bagaimana guru dalam konteks madrasah tertentu menginternalisasi dan menerapkan prinsip moderasi beragama dalam praktik pedagogis sehari-hari. Penelitian ini mengisi kesenjangan tersebut dengan menilai pemahaman konseptual dan penerapan praktis moderasi oleh para guru. Desain penelitian yang digunakan adalah mixed methods sequential explanatory. Data kuantitatif dikumpulkan dari 15 guru melalui kuesioner Likert 20 butir dan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif melalui SPSS 26. Data kualitatif diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seluruh guru memiliki tingkat pemahaman dan praktik moderasi beragama yang sangat tinggi. Terdapat tiga temuan utama. Pertama, guru secara konsisten mengintegrasikan nilai moderasi seperti toleransi, keadilan, dan

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keseimbangan dalam kegiatan pembelajaran dan interaksi sosial. Kedua, komitmen kebangsaan, kerja sama antaragama, dan sikap anti-kekerasan tercermin kuat dalam respons mereka. Ketiga, budaya institusi dan dukungan kepemimpinan berperan signifikan dalam memperkuat keberlanjutan praktik moderasi.

Introduction

Indonesia is known as the world's largest Muslim country inhabited by various tribes, cultures, languages, and local traditions (Husna et al., 2023). This diversity positions Indonesia as a multicultural nation capable of maintaining social harmony despite its vulnerability to identity conflicts and differences in belief. In such a pluralistic context, religious moderation becomes an essential principle for sustaining balanced religious life (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021). Teachers hold a strategic role as agents of value transformation who influence students' ways of thinking, attitudes, and behaviors. However, the rapid development of information technology, the spread of radical ideas in digital spaces, and increasing symptoms of intolerance in schools require strengthening the role of teachers, particularly madrasah teachers, in cultivating genuine attitudes of diversity (Purwowidodo, 2017).

National studies indicate that intolerance and radicalism have penetrated educational spaces. Research by PPIM UIN Jakarta shows that 34.3 percent of students, teachers, and lecturers across 34 provinces expressed intolerance toward followers of other religions (Nisa et al., 2020). Subsequent findings in 2018 revealed that 50.87 percent of teachers and 58 percent of students exhibited extremist tendencies (Nisa et al., 2018; Nisa et al., 2020). Other studies report the presence of students with low tolerance, although many still demonstrate positive attitudes. Conversely, findings by Arief et al. (2022) show that students at SMA Negeri 2 Martapura possess strong national and moderate perspectives. These variations suggest that religious moderation in education cannot be generalized and is shaped by local contexts, school policies, and teacher quality. Literature also emphasizes that education plays a vital role in developing moderate character through literacy, experience, school environment, and teacher role models (Cholifah & Faelasup, 2024).

Although research on intolerance and radicalism in schools exists, there remains a gap in studies that deeply examine teachers' understanding of religious moderation within specific madrasah contexts. Most previous studies address intolerance at a macro level without exploring how moderation values are understood, internalized, and practiced by religious teachers in madrasah environments (Hasanah & Abbas, 2023). Islamic Religious Education teachers are crucial in guiding students toward wasathiyah values such as balance, tolerance, justice, and non-excessiveness. At Madrasah Aliyah Sejahtera Kediri, which upholds the five "SEJAHTERA" values, examining teachers' understanding of religious moderation is essential to assess how these values are embedded in educational processes. The absence of focused studies in this context underscores the need for more in-depth research.

This study aims to analyze the level of understanding and implementation of religious moderation among teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Sejahtera Kediri. Specifically, it examines how teachers conceptualize religious moderation, the values they uphold, and how these values are applied in learning practices, social interactions, and educational management. The study also identifies supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of moderation and evaluates the extent to which madrasah policies, leadership, and institutional culture foster a moderate educational climate. Through a mixed-methods approach, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of teachers' roles as key actors in religious moderation education in Indonesia.

This research is important because it strengthens the discourse on religious moderation in educational settings, particularly madrasahs. Amid rising challenges of intolerance, extremism, and radicalism, studies that directly assess how teachers understand and teach moderation values are indispensable. The findings are expected to provide empirical insights for curriculum development, teacher quality improvement, and capacity-building programs. Scientifically, this study contributes by filling the limited literature on in-depth analyses of moderation within specific madrasah contexts and offers a reference for similar research in other institutions. The study also provides novel evidence on how moderation values are internalized at both conceptual and practical levels and highlights institutional mechanisms that support sustainable moderation practices, offering theoretical and practical implications for strengthening religious moderation in Islamic education.

Method

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, which was selected because it allows quantitative findings to be clarified and deepened through qualitative exploration. The research questions focus on both the level of teachers' understanding of religious moderation and the ways in which moderation values are implemented in pedagogical and social practices. A mixed methods approach is therefore the most appropriate choice, as it provides a comprehensive understanding that cannot be captured through a single method. The quantitative phase offers measurable patterns of teachers' attitudes, while the qualitative phase explains the underlying reasons, experiences, and contextual factors that shape those patterns. This design aligns with the study's aim to integrate conceptual understanding with practical implementation in a specific madrasah environment.

The participants of the study consisted of 20 teachers at MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri. The quantitative sample included 15 teachers selected through purposive sampling, with the inclusion criterion being teachers who were present during the data collection period and directly involved in the educational activities relevant to the research focus. Teachers who were absent or whose roles were not aligned with the study's objectives were excluded. For the qualitative phase, additional participants were identified using snowball sampling to ensure that informants possessed deeper insight into the implementation of religious moderation. Data sources included questionnaire responses, semi-structured interviews with six selected teachers, participant observations of moderation practices in the school environment, and institutional documents such as school archives and activity records.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. Quantitative data from the 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire were processed using SPSS version 26 to generate descriptive statistics, including means and percentages, which were used to categorize teachers' levels of understanding and implementation of religious moderation. Qualitative data were analyzed following the Miles and Huberman framework, beginning with data reduction to identify relevant themes, followed by data display to organize emerging patterns, and concluding with interpretation to draw meaningful conclusions. Integration of both datasets occurred after each phase was completed, where quantitative results guided the selection of qualitative informants, and qualitative findings were used to explain and enrich the statistical outcomes. This stepwise analytical process ensured methodological rigor and produced a holistic understanding of religious moderation among teachers at MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri.

Results and Discussion

Overview of Teachers' Understanding of Religious Moderation at MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri

The results of this study indicate that all teachers at MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri demonstrate an open and inclusive disposition, with a consistent tendency toward moderate religious practice. This disposition is reflected in several observable patterns, including openness to new information, acceptance of diversity, and alignment between verbal expression, behavior, and pedagogical decisions. These characteristics correspond with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' conceptualization of religious moderation, which encompasses *Tawassut* (the middle way), *Tasamuh* (tolerance), *I'tidal* (justice), and *Tawazun* (balance) in understanding and practicing religious teachings (Hasanah & Abbas, 2023). Within the educational context, teachers do not treat religious moderation merely as a normative concept but integrate it into learning processes and students' social development (Islamy, 2021). This aligns with theories of moderate character formation that emphasize openness, respect for difference, and rejection of extremism as foundational elements of Islamic education (Musyahid & Kolis, 2023).

1. Teacher's Level of Understanding of the Concept of Religious Moderation

Qualitative data reveal that teachers possess a deep understanding of religious moderation, corresponding to the "application" and "analysis" levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Teachers are able to articulate the relationship between moderation and extremism, differentiate core moderation values such as *tasamuh*, *i'tidal*, and *musawah*, and contextualize these principles within Indonesia's socio-religious landscape. This understanding is illustrated in Table 1, which summarizes teachers' interpretations of moderation, extremism, key indicators, and associated values.

Table 1. Teachers' Understanding of Religious Moderation of MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri

Participant No.	Definition of Religious Moderation	Definition of Extremism	of	Indicators of Religious Moderation	Values of Religious Moderation
1	Religious views and practices	Religion transcends boundaries	that	Tolerance, National commitment	Upholding tolerance, implementing diversity in society
2	Behavior in religion in a society.	Radical Understanding Religion	in	Tolerance and respect between religions	Upholding tolerance, implementing diversity in society
3	How to think about religious behavior	something transcends boundaries	that	Tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of tradition	Upholding tolerance, implementing diversity in society
4	Religious views and behaviors	Religion transcends boundaries	that	Tolerance, non-violence, acceptance of tradition	Upholding tolerance, implementing diversity in society
5	A way of thinking in religious behavior.	Something that goes beyond limits.		Tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of tradition	Upholding tolerance, implementing diversity in society

6	Efforts to understand and practice religion to the maximum.	Excessive in religion	Tolerance, non-violence, acceptance of tradition	non-and	Upholding tolerance, implementing diversity in society
7	Religious tolerance	Be rude	Harmony between nations	between	Tolerance
8	A perspective respects differences.	Understanding religion is too radical.	Tolerance, non-violence, acceptance of tradition	non-and	Respecting tolerance for diversity
9	An attitude that respects diversity	Fanaticism in teaching	Tolerance, not extreme, respect between religious people		Upholding tolerance, implementing diversity in society
10	Religious tolerance in carrying out worship according to their respective beliefs, respecting and upholding the dignity of humanity.	Exaggerating religious identity ultimately causes unrest in the religious community.	Always open means accepting criticism and input, thinking critically in religious life, and being tolerant.		Religious tolerance, not religious extremism.

(Source: interview with Fatma Fitriya, Ma'rufah, Ferina Lailil Alwi, Linda Sriningsih, Ani Kumalsari, Imam Shodiq, Andri Rojabi Huda, Binti Solikhah, Dianika Wisnu Wardhani, Riyanto)

The data above show that teachers consistently associate moderation with tolerance, non-violence, respect for diversity, and national commitment. Theoretically, this indicates that teachers are not only knowledgeable but capable of applying moderation principles in instructional settings and analyzing extremism using moderation-based evaluative tools. These findings reinforce the argument of Flores Bobadilla et al. (2024) that mature conceptual understanding is demonstrated through the ability to translate abstract concepts into pedagogical action.

2. Analysis of Four Indicators of Religious Moderation

a. National Commitment

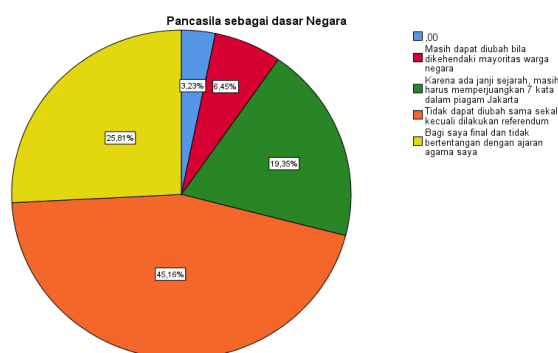


Figure 2. National Commitment

Survey results show a high level of national commitment among teachers. Approximately 45 percent believe that Pancasila is immutable, while 25.81 percent view it as a final ideology that aligns with religious teachings. These findings support the notion that national commitment is a central pillar of religious moderation and essential for maintaining societal harmony (Ezziti, 2022).



Figure 3. Views on Citizen Equality

Furthermore, 64 percent of teachers affirm that all religions hold equal legal standing, reflecting an understanding of inclusive citizenship and reinforcing the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ indicators of moderation, which emphasize respect for the constitution, law, and national unity (Islamy, 2022).

2. Tolerance



Figure 4. Teachers' Tolerance

Teachers exhibit a high level of tolerance, with 64.52 percent strongly agreeing that tolerance is integral to religious teachings and 29.03 percent agreeing. This aligns with the Islamic principle of *tasamuh*, which emphasizes respect for differing beliefs and the provision of space for others to express their religious views (Rasidin et al., 2023). Additionally, 45.16 percent strongly disagree with prohibitions on interfaith cooperation, indicating strong support for cross-faith collaboration. This finding is consistent with Farcic et al. (2020), who argue that schools serve as strategic environments for fostering healthy interreligious relationships.

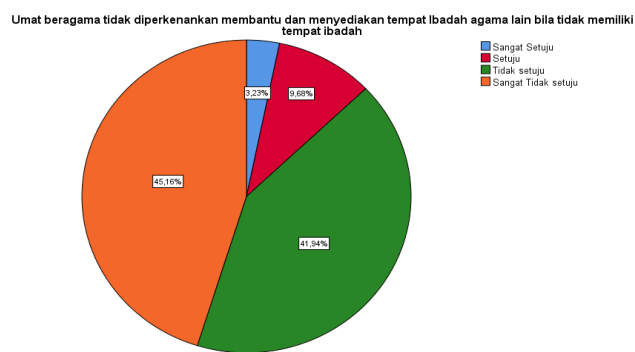


Figure 5. Cooperation Between Religions

The findings showed that 45.16% of teachers strongly disagreed with views that prohibit interfaith cooperation, indicating high acceptance of cross-faith collaboration. This finding is in line with the study by Farcic et al. which states that schools are a strategic space to build healthy interfaith relationships (Farcic et al. 2020).

3. Anti-Violence

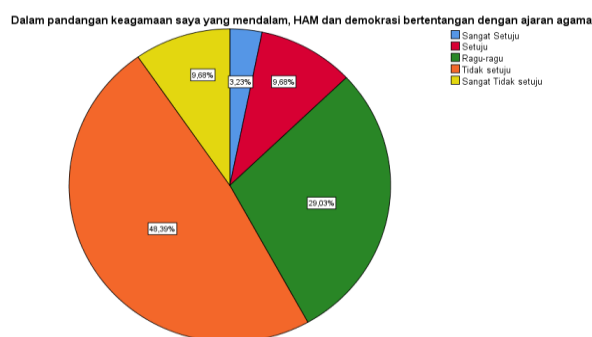


Figure 6. Attitudes towards Human Rights and Democracy

As many as 48.39% of teachers stated that they did not agree with the view that human rights and democracy are contrary to religion. This attitude reflects the anti-violence and anti-extremism character that are key indicators of religious moderation. This consistency strengthens Resane's opinion that moderate education citizens will choose dialogue, not violence, in resolving social and religious problems (Resane 2022).

4. Acceptance of Local Customs and Traditions

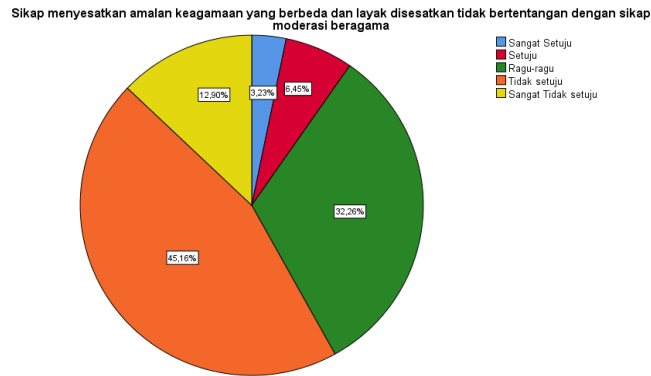


Figure 7. Acceptance of Customs

Teachers at MA Sejahtera also demonstrate a high level of acceptance toward local customs and traditions. Although 45.16 percent acknowledge that certain practices may be considered “heretical” in theological discourse, they do not translate this into discriminatory social behavior. In practice, teachers continue to respect cultural diversity and local ritual variations. These findings align with the principles of Islam Nusantara and the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ cultural framework, which emphasize the role of local wisdom in strengthening harmony and fostering moderate attitudes (Mailin et al., 2023).

Teachers' Conceptual Understanding of Religious Moderation in Theoretical Perspectives and Educational Practice

The findings indicate that teachers at MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri possess a conceptual understanding of religious moderation that extends beyond theoretical knowledge and develops into reflective and practical application. They view religious moderation as an approach that harmonizes religious values with Indonesia’s pluralistic social context (Wardhani, 2022). This perspective aligns with the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ framework, which emphasizes balance, tolerance, justice, and wisdom in responding to diversity (Islamy & Amirullah, 2022). Teachers also interpret religious moderation as an integral part of Indonesia’s Islamic identity, one that is deeply connected to local culture and indigenous wisdom (F. Fitriya, 2022). This interpretation is consistent with literature describing moderation as a historical characteristic of Indonesian Muslim communities that have long coexisted with diverse ethnic and religious groups (Syafieh & Anzaikhan, 2022; Hakim et al., 2023; Salim & Amrina Rosada, 2023).

Teachers further explain that extremism emerges when religious teachings are interpreted rigidly or excessively, whether through textualism that neglects rationality or liberalism that disregards interpretive principles and sharia guidelines. This demonstrates their cognitive maturity in distinguishing between normative religious commitment and extreme attitudes (Van Der Walt et al., 2015; Husnawadi & Nasri, 2023). In interviews, teachers emphasized that religious moderation is rooted in the principle of *Rahmatan lil ‘Alamin*, the universal Islamic message of compassion. They do not perceive moderation as a compromise of religious doctrine but as an embodiment of *Islam Wasathiyah*, which upholds equilibrium between revelation and reason (A. Kumalsari & B. Solikhah, 2022). This understanding is consistent with Qur’anic teachings, such as *Surah Al-Baqarah 2:143*, which describes Muslims as a just and moderate community.

Their perspective also aligns with the Aswaja tradition, grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma', and Qiyas, which historically shaped inclusive and tolerant Islamic practice in Indonesia (Rahmat et al., 2019).

From a normative standpoint, teachers recognize that religious moderation is supported by both Islamic scripture and national legal frameworks (Kumalsari, 2022). They identify several Qur'anic verses that underpin moderation, including Surah Al-Hadid 57:25 on balance (*tawazun*), Surah Al-Maidah 5:8 on justice (*i'tidal*), and Surah Al-Baqarah 2:83 on social ethics. They also associate moderation with national ideology and legal instruments such as Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and human rights legislation, as well as government policies promoting harmony and religious freedom (A. R. Huda, 2022). These insights demonstrate that teachers understand moderation through both theological and civic lenses.

Teachers' conceptualization of moderation is further reinforced by their awareness of Indonesia's historical trajectory. They refer to the role of BPUPKI, national consensus, and the Islamic traditions of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah as examples of how moderation has served as a unifying force in nation-building (A. R. Huda, 2022). This indicates that teachers perceive moderation as essential for maintaining social cohesion and safeguarding society from radicalism.

In educational practice, teachers acknowledge that religious moderation directly influences students' character formation. They highlight that integrating moderation values into the curriculum and school culture fosters inclusivity, tolerance, and responsibility among students (F. L. Alwi, 2022). Interviews reveal that moderation helps students appreciate religious differences, resist radical influences, avoid violence, and develop cooperative skills (Shodiq, 2022). These insights align with studies showing that moderation-based education strengthens diversity literacy and contributes to a safe and conducive learning environment (Ardiyansyah et al., 2025). Teachers also recognize that moderation must be embedded not only in formal instruction but also in the hidden curriculum, including role modeling, social interactions, school culture, and daily routines. At MA Sejahtera, moderation is practiced through habituation of tolerance, student collaboration, and peaceful conflict resolution (Wardhani, 2022). This demonstrates that teachers internalize moderation as a lived value rather than an abstract concept.

Overall, the study shows that teachers' understanding of religious moderation is comprehensive, encompassing theological, national, historical, pedagogical, and social dimensions. This depth of understanding provides a strong foundation for sustaining religious moderation initiatives within the madrasah environment.

MA Sejahtera's Efforts in Building Religious Moderation

The findings indicate that MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri has implemented a wide range of comprehensive strategies to cultivate and institutionalize the values of religious moderation within the madrasah environment. These efforts stem from the recognition that schools serve as the most effective social spaces for shaping inclusive and tolerant attitudes. This aligns with Beemsterboer's argument that schools can reduce religious and social segregation through structured interactions among diverse students (Beemsterboer, 2022). In the madrasah context, the urgency of implementing religious moderation is even greater, as religious education plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious perspectives and behaviors (Kawasi et al., 2023).

According to Sriningsih, religious moderation is understood as a fundamental necessity in social life, as humans cannot live in isolation from those of different beliefs; therefore, tolerance becomes a prerequisite for social harmony (Sriningsih, 2022). This understanding is operationalized through various school programs, including habituation of moderate religious literacy, guidance on tolerance in daily interactions, and educational services grounded in family-based principles regardless of ethnic or religious background. Such practices reflect a character-education approach that emphasizes modeling and habituation, consistent with Komalasari and Saripudin's view that moderate character formation is more effectively achieved through daily practice than through normative instruction (Komalasari & Saripudin, 2017).

The integration of moderation into learning activities is also evident. As explained by the deputy head of curriculum, Dianika Wisnu Wardhani, moderation values are embedded across subjects, particularly within the Islamic Religious Education cluster. In Qur'an Hadith classes, teachers relate scriptural teachings on tolerance and harmony to contemporary social issues. In Moral Theology, the concept of faith is linked to moral obligations of tolerance and respect for difference. Fiqh lessons address contemporary issues such as interfaith marriage objectively, helping students understand that differences in jurisprudential views do not necessarily lead to conflict. Meanwhile, Islamic Cultural History highlights that Islamic civilization has historically developed within pluralistic societies, demonstrating that coexistence is not a new concept in Islam (D. W. Wardhani, 2022). This pedagogical approach aligns with the view that religious education should be dialogical and encourage the exchange of ideas (Paiva et al., 2022).

At the level of school culture, teachers such as Marfu'ah, Shodiq, Sholikhah, Sriningsih, and Kumalsari describe how the madrasah promotes moderation through continuous social habituation. The five core values of the madrasah, encompassing spiritual and social dimensions, guide the behavior of all school members. School regulations are designed to reflect moderation principles, including prohibitions against discriminatory or intolerant behavior. The habituation of the 5S culture: greeting, smiling, salutation, politeness, and courtesy, which serves as a social mechanism for fostering harmonious interactions. The madrasah also regularly conducts seminars, workshops and dialogues to strengthen the community's understanding of moderation (Ma'rufah et al, 2022). This culture-based approach aligns with O'Leary's concept of social character formation, which emphasizes the importance of consistent habituation in shaping character (O'Leary, 2020).

In classroom practice, Islamic Religious Education teachers provide concrete examples of moderation. In Fiqh lessons, students analyze contemporary issues such as variations in worship practices and learn to respond to them wisely. In Moral Theology, tolerance is taught as an integral part of noble character. In Islamic Cultural History, teachers highlight historical evidence showing that Islamic civilization flourished through respect for cultural diversity. These examples demonstrate that teachers possess sufficient understanding to connect moderation concepts with students' social realities (Wardhani, 2022). The various strategies implemented by MA Sejahtera are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 MA Sejahtera's Efforts in Grounding Religious Moderation at School

No	Strategy and Implementation
1	Integration of curriculum with moderation values in all PAI clusters
2	Development of madrasah regulations supporting religious moderation
3	Strengthening spiritual (K1) and social (K2) aspects in student habituation
4	Socialization of moderation through seminars and workshops
5	Public lectures (stadium general) on moderation themes
6	Habituation of 5S culture (greeting, smiling, salutation, politeness, courtesy)
7	Development of tolerance within school and community
8	Cultivation of moderation-based religious literacy
9	Strengthening inclusive religious literacy
10	Collaboration between schools, government, and communities in moderation programs

Field findings also show that the madrasah has implemented KMA 183 of 2019 on the PAI and Arabic Language Curriculum and KMA 184 of 2019 on Curriculum Implementation Guidelines. These regulations provide a legal foundation for developing a curriculum that strengthens character, madrasah identity, anti-corruption education, and religious moderation. Implementation began in the 2020/2021 academic year. Teachers are given space to innovate in strengthening moderation, and although such innovations may not always appear in administrative documents, they are consistently reflected in classroom practice (Solikhah, 2022).

The efforts of MA Sejahtera are consistent with international literature that positions religious moderation as a key instrument for preventing radicalism, strengthening social solidarity, and enhancing interfaith understanding. Soejoeti et al. (2024) found that moderation reduces prejudice and stereotypes between religious groups. Similarly, studies by Acciari (2019), Guetta (2020), and Sheikh and Akhter (2023) affirm that education grounded in dialogue, inclusivity, and value balance forms the foundation of a peaceful society.

To summarize, these findings demonstrate that MA Sejahtera's approach to religious moderation is holistic, encompassing curriculum integration, school culture, social interaction patterns, and value-based educational activities. This comprehensive strategy positions the madrasah as a pivotal institution for cultivating a generation that embodies tolerance, inclusivity, and balanced religious understanding. Field findings also show that madrasahs have implemented KMA 183 of 2019 concerning the PAI and Arabic Language Curriculum and KMA 184 of 2019 concerning Curriculum Implementation Guidelines. The two regulations provide a legal basis for madrasahs to develop a curriculum that strengthens the character, identity of the madrasah, anti-corruption education, and the development of religious moderation. The implementation of this

policy began to run in the 2020/2021 school year. Teachers are given space to innovate in strengthening moderation, and while they are not always embodied in administration, these values are embodied through real-world practice in the classroom (Solikhah, 2022).

The efforts made by MA Sejahtera are in line with international literature that views religious moderation as an important instrument in preventing radicalism, strengthening social solidarity, and increasing interfaith understanding. Soejoeti et al. found that moderation is able to remove prejudices and stereotypes between religions (Soejoeti et al. 2024). Similarly, the research of Acciari, Guetta and Sheikh and Akhter confirms that education that emphasizes dialogue, inclusivity and value balance is the foundation for a peaceful society (Acciari 2019); Guetta 2020; Sheikh and Akhter 2023). In other words, MA Sejahtera's efforts in building religious moderation are not only centered on curriculum aspects, but also include school culture, social interaction patterns, and the integration of values in various educational activities. This comprehensive approach makes madrassas a strategic space to form a generation full of tolerance and inclusivity, and balanced religious understanding.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers at MA Sejahtera Pare Kediri possess a consistently high level of understanding and implementation of religious moderation. They internalize moderation not only as a conceptual framework but as a practical guide embedded in learning activities, school culture, and daily interactions. Teachers exhibit strong national commitment, high tolerance, rejection of violence, and acceptance of local traditions, showing that moderation values are well integrated into both pedagogical practice and social behavior. These results directly answer the research question by confirming that teachers at MA Sejahtera effectively understand and apply religious moderation across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions.

This study, however, has methodological limitations. The sample size is relatively small and limited to one madrasah, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce social desirability bias, particularly on sensitive issues such as extremism and tolerance. Future research should expand to multiple institutions, employ larger and more diverse samples, and incorporate additional methods such as classroom ethnography or longitudinal tracking to capture changes in moderation practices over time.

Building on these findings, future studies could explore comparative analyses between different types of madrasahs, examine the long-term impact of moderation-based curricula on student character development, or investigate the role of leadership and institutional policy in sustaining moderation culture. Practically, this study highlights the need for continuous teacher training, curriculum strengthening, and school-wide programs that reinforce moderation values. Theoretically, the study contributes to the growing discourse on religious moderation by showing how moderation is operationalized at the micro-level of teaching practice, offering a model for integrating theological, civic, and cultural dimensions of moderation within Islamic education.

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