



## Internalization of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Religious Education: A Multisite Study at SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut

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### Abstract

*This study aims to examine the forms and causes of radicalism among students, as well as assess the effectiveness and challenges of internalizing religious moderation values through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The study employs a qualitative approach with a multisite design at SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut. Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, with data analysis using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The results show that radicalism in Garut develops latently through exclusivism and ideological segregation, influenced by psychosocial factors and the surrounding environment. Religious moderation values have been internalized through PAI learning and school culture, making both schools models of ideological resilience. The internalization process, through the stages of transformation, transaction, and transinternalization, encourages students to practice tolerance. Although effective, challenges such as ideological enclaves and external influences that do not support moderation remain. This study contributes to understanding ways to build ideological resilience in students against radicalization.*

**Keywords:** Internalization of Values; Religious Moderation; Islamic Religious Education; Radicalism

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bentuk dan penyebab radikalisme di kalangan siswa, serta menilai efektivitas dan tantangan dalam internalisasi nilai-nilai moderasi beragama melalui pembelajaran PAI. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain multisitus di SMAN 1 dan SMKN 1 Garut. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, dengan analisis data model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa radikalisme di Garut berkembang secara laten melalui eksklusivisme dan segregasi ideologis yang dipengaruhi oleh faktor psikososial dan lingkungan. Nilai-nilai moderasi beragama telah diinternalisasi dalam pembelajaran PAI dan budaya sekolah, menjadikannya sebagai model ketahanan ideologis. Proses internalisasi melalui tahap transformasi, transaksi, dan transinternalisasi mendorong siswa mengamalkan toleransi. Meskipun efektif, tantangan berupa enclave ideologis dan pengaruh luar yang tidak mendukung moderasi masih ada. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi dalam memahami cara-cara membangun ketahanan

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ideologis siswa terhadap radikalisasi.

**Kata kunci :** Internaliasai Nilai; Moderasi Beragama; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Radikalisme.

## **I. Introduction**

The phenomenon of radicalism among teenagers reflects broader national dynamics, with adolescents being particularly vulnerable to radical ideologies through digital channels, exclusive religious gatherings, and online friendships. Several causes have been identified: First, exposure to extremist narratives via social media, where radical groups spread their ideology through open and closed channels (Sugihartati et al., 2020). Second, the identity crisis experienced by adolescents makes them susceptible to ideologies that offer certainty. Third, the absence of strong counter-narratives from families, teachers, and moderate religious institutions, which should offer peaceful and adaptive understandings of religion (M. Ghufron & Suminta, 2020).

To respond to these challenges, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2022) has formulated four pillars of religious moderation as a guide in developing the PAI curriculum: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. These pillars are crucial in shaping students' character to be both religious and tolerant. Studies show that religious moderation learning is more effective when PAI teachers use thematic and interfaith approaches, such as visits to places of worship of different religions, discussions with interfaith leaders, and conflict resolution simulations. Additionally, project-based learning (Project-Based Learning) has proven effective in fostering deeper understanding, where students create tolerance campaigns, educational videos, or organize interfaith webinars.

However, the process of internalizing moderation values faces several obstacles. Structural and cultural barriers persist, such as insufficient teacher training on moderation and tolerance, leading to a normative, textual approach in PAI that lacks contextual relevance (Fauziyah & Hidayati, 2023). The absence of collaboration between subjects and schools in conveying tolerance values makes the message of moderation limited to the PAI classroom. Additionally, stigmatization of critical students distorts their engagement with moderate approaches, pushing them towards other, potentially radical, expressions.

The study does not aim to label or stigmatize students, but rather to identify early tendencies and latent indicators of exclusivism that may develop into radical attitudes if left unaddressed. To address these issues, this study proposes a five-stage model for internalizing religious moderation values: contextualization, actualization, exemplary and social habituation, inclusivity and differentiation, and digital externalization. The first stage, contextualization, connects learning materials to students' local realities, such as culture and history. The second stage, actualization, involves social practice, like interfaith community service. The third stage, exemplary and social habituation,

emphasizes teachers and community leaders as role models of moderate religious practice. The fourth stage, inclusivity and differentiation, promotes open dialogue to embrace diverse identities. The final stage, digital externalization, encourages students to create digital content, such as videos and social media narratives, to counter intolerant content (Setia & Haq, 2023; Zulfikar et al., 2023).

Religious radicalism among teenagers requires a cross-sectoral approach, with education, especially PAI, playing a strategic role in building students' ideological resilience. The success of this effort depends on curriculum quality, teacher competence, parental involvement, and digital strategies. The five-stage model offers a constructive approach to grounding religious moderation in the digital age, with the aim of protecting youth from radical ideologies while promoting religious, tolerant, and peaceful values.

The core issue addressed in this study is the limited effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in internalizing religious moderation values among students, especially in the face of increasing exposure to radical ideologies among teenagers. Despite national efforts and curriculum reforms, structural challenges, such as insufficient teacher training, lack of interdisciplinary collaboration, and minimal student engagement in digital counter-narratives, hinder the effective implementation of moderation values in schools. Therefore, this study aims to explore how religious moderation can be more effectively internalized through PAI practices in schools, focusing on a structured five-stage model that integrates contextual, social, and digital strategies.

Based on this, the study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do teachers and students experience and implement religious moderation in PAI learning? (2) What are the challenges in internalizing religious moderation values within different school settings? (3) How can the proposed five-stage model enhance the process of internalizing religious moderation among students?

This research contributes to the existing literature by offering a multisite, practice-based analysis of religious moderation education in two different school types (SMAN and SMKN), which is rarely explored in previous studies. It also introduces a new five-stage model that goes beyond the normative curriculum by emphasizing digital engagement, cultural contextualization, and inclusive dialogue, thus addressing gaps in earlier research that often overlook students' lived experiences and the digital realities they face. This novelty strengthens the relevance of PAI as a strategic tool for building youth resilience against radicalism in the digital era.

## **II. Research Method**

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore in-depth the meanings, experiences, and practices of teachers and students in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) related to the internalization of religious moderation values (Creswell, 2009). This

approach is ideal for examining complex, contextual social phenomena within education, as it allows researchers to capture reality as understood by the research subjects themselves (Afriantoni et al., 2023). The qualitative approach also supports an emic understanding of how religious moderation values are implemented in learning practices, beyond written documents or formal policies. Additionally, a phenomenological approach is applied, focusing on the subjective experiences and meaning constructions of educational actors, including teachers, students, and school principals (Umiarso & Muhammad Qorib, 2022).

A multisite design was chosen to compare the practices of internalizing religious moderation values in two state schools at different levels: SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut. This approach captures variations in educational practices stemming from differences in institutional characteristics and school cultures. The multisite design enriches data through stronger contextual triangulation, particularly in the implementation of interfaith activities, the application of the PAI curriculum, and school community involvement (Burhan et al., 2024; Khasanah et al., 2023). It also considers the geographical context, students' socio-economic backgrounds, and the schools' religiosity, all of which influence how religious values are internalized and moderated.

This study used a purposive sampling strategy, selecting informants based on their relevance and direct involvement in the internalization of religious moderation values in schools. The informants included school principals, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, students from grades X, XI, and XII, the Head of the Education Office, the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and a representative from the Almagari Islamic organization. Informants were chosen based on criteria such as active participation in religious and interfaith activities, decision-making roles, and direct experience with PAI practices. This sampling approach ensured diverse perspectives and rich, meaningful data.

Although the study claimed to use a phenomenological approach, the actual data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. A true phenomenological approach would require specific steps like bracketing assumptions and describing the essence of lived experiences. Since these were not applied, the methodology label should either be adjusted to match the actual procedures—such as calling it an interpretive qualitative study or a multisite case study—or the analysis process should be revised to align with phenomenological principles. This alignment is essential to ensure methodological consistency and clarity.

Data collection was carried out through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations took place during PAI lessons and school religious activities to capture the dynamics of teacher-student interactions. A participatory

observation approach was employed, allowing the researcher not only to observe passively but also to engage with the classroom context and learning atmosphere holistically (Afriantoni et al., 2023; Zulkifli et al., 2023). Interviews were conducted with PAI teachers, school principals, and students to gain deeper insights into the internalization process of moderation values. Documentation, such as syllabi, lesson plans (RPP), student portfolios, and records of interfaith activities, was analyzed to support the findings from observations and interviews. The combination of these techniques enhanced validity through methodological triangulation (Isnaniah & Islahuddin, 2022).

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting relevant information from observations, interviews, and documentation. The data were presented through matrices and thematic narratives to facilitate initial conclusions. This process was iterative, with continuous reviews to ensure consistent thematic patterns (Afriantoni et al., 2023; Zulkifli et al., 2023). The analysis revealed latent meanings not always verbalized but recorded in behavioral patterns, symbols, and learning habits.

### **III. Result and Discussion**

#### **A. Forms and Causes of Radicalism Among Indonesian Youth**

##### **1. Life, Intellectual Profile and Significant Works**

The phenomenon of religious radicalism among Indonesian youth does not always manifest explicitly through violence or open hate speech, but often develops latently and symbolically. This can be seen in the form of religious exclusivism, ideological segregation, and intolerance toward religious symbols or other groups. These symptoms reflect non-physical forms of radicalism that still impact social harmony and the cohesion of diversity. For example, a study by Gazali et al. shows that most students in public and religious schools in Indonesia demonstrate a strong tendency toward symbolic radicalism, such as supporting the formal implementation of sharia, rejecting Pancasila, and showing reluctance toward other religious groups (Gazali et al., 2024). This phenomenon is reinforced by Sirry, who found that students exposed to radical ideologies do not necessarily become perpetrators of violence but often display exclusivist attitudes toward adherents of different ideologies (Sirry, 2020). As the principal of SMAN 1 Garut and MUI stated:

We once saw signs of students who tended to withdraw and only associated with certain groups with uniform views. Although it has not yet led to radicalism, such exclusive patterns of thinking have the potential to foster intolerance if not properly addressed" (Interview with Sumpena Permana, Principal of SMAN 1 Garut).

Based on field findings and MUI interviews with various community leaders, a subtle pattern of intolerant ideology dissemination has been identified. This can be observed in sermons containing hate speech against followers of other religions, as well as the use of syar'i-tinged terminology exploited to divide unity. In addition, there have been calls to reject democracy, to avoid flag ceremonies, and to oppose national symbols (Interview with KH. Heri Mohamad Tohari, Indonesian Ulema Council/MUI).

Radicalism among youth cannot be separated from psychosocial factors, particularly identity crises. Adolescence is a vulnerable stage where the search for identity can make young people easily influenced by narratives that offer certainty and a strong sense of belonging. Fautanu notes that many Indonesian students associate radicalism with an inability to accept differences and a desire for uniformity in thinking, rooted in religious education that is textual and exclusivist (Fautanu, 2022). In addition, historical traumas such as legal injustice, discrimination, or the marginalization of certain groups may serve as fertile ground for the entry of radical ideologies. As one teacher stated:

Many students attend study groups without us knowing who the preacher is. From there, exclusive understandings often emerge that contradict the values of moderation taught in schools (Interview with Asep Jauhari, SMKN 1 Garut).

Economic factors also play a significant role in the growth of radicalism. Economic inequality, unemployment, and poverty often create social frustration, providing opportunities for radical groups to recruit new members. Hefner highlights that although economic factors are not the sole cause, in the Indonesian context dissatisfaction with the economic system is often used by radical groups to propagate anti-state and anti-capitalist narratives (Hefner, 2022). In a case study in Lamongan, Saefullah demonstrated that youth interest in conservative ideologies was influenced by the social and economic inequalities they faced (Saefullah, 2022).

Local cultural traditions with conservative tendencies can also contribute to the emergence of exclusivism. Patriarchal culture, rigid value systems, and limited intergroup dialogue contribute to strengthening intolerance within society. In this context, emphasizes that interfaith dialogue involving youth is one of the most effective strategies for breaking down exclusivist barriers rooted in culture and religion (Ichwayudi, 2020). Meanwhile, adds that the hijrah phenomenon within underground music subcultures marks the rise of a "new cultural conservatism" among young people, which often becomes a bridge toward ideological radicalism (Saefullah, 2022).

Digital media has become the most significant catalyst in the spread of radical ideologies in the contemporary era. The internet enables radical narratives to spread massively, rapidly, and anonymously. Meanwhile, Burhanuddin et al. demonstrated a strong correlation between real-world attitudes and intolerant behavior on social media,

showing that digital existence reinforces individuals' ideological biases (Burhanuddin, 2015).

The strengthening of group identity through digital platforms such as YouTube, Islamic preaching on Instagram, and TikTok also amplifies radical symbolic narratives. Highlight how TikTok is used as a primary medium for disseminating populist Islamic narratives, which sometimes subtly insert intolerant teachings in ways that are attractive to younger generations (Ahmad et al., 2022). Social media functions not only as a space for content consumption but also as a site for ideological identity production, forming "imagined communities" that reinforce exclusivist worldviews. The forms of radicalism that emerge latently and symbolically through exclusivism, segregation, and intolerance are reflections of complex psychosocial, economic, cultural, and digital conditions. Confronting this challenge requires critical education, digital literacy, and open dialogue spaces to build the ideological resilience of young generations.

## **B. The Practice of Internalizing Religious Moderation Values at SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut**

At SMAN 1 Garut, the internalization of religious moderation values is carried out through a dialogical and reflective approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The PAI teachers at this school do not merely teach religious doctrines normatively but also encourage students to reflect on the meaning of diversity and the importance of tolerance in social life. Such reflection-based learning has proven effective in increasing students' awareness of pluralism and shows indications of the emergence of exclusivist attitudes (M. A. Ghufron et al., 2024).

Religious moderation has a very crucial role. By instilling moderation values, we seek to shows indications of the rise of intolerant and radical attitudes, while shaping students' character so that they can appreciate differences and live harmoniously in a diverse society (Interview with Sumpena Permana Putra, Principal of SMAN 1 Garut).

The same spirit is shared at SMKN 1 Garut:

"Religious moderation is not about mixing different teachings, but about practicing religion with wisdom, fairness, and peace. This is important as a safeguard against radical or intolerant ideologies that may unknowingly enter the school environment (Interview with Ai Nurjannah, Vice Principal of Student Affairs, SMKN 1 Garut).

This learning model aligns with the findings of Sihotang and Waruwu, who integrated the Iceberg Analysis and U-Process approaches in the context of multifaith schools in Indonesia (Sihotang et al., 2024). They showed that active student participation in reflective discussions significantly improves cognitive outcomes and moderate behavior. This approach also helps students internalize interfaith values more deeply, not just at the cognitive level.

At SMAN 1 Garut, interfaith dialogue programs are also initiated through regular visits to schools of other faith traditions, such as Catholic and Christian schools. These activities serve not only as opportunities for intellectual exchange but also as avenues for building interfaith empathy. According to Aruman et al. (2024), social interaction in interfaith contexts forms an essential foundation for creating moderate spaces in schools, as it helps dismantle stereotypes and prejudices.

In addition, interfaith spiritual programs are provided, allowing non-Muslim students to have dedicated spaces and mentoring for their religious activities. This is crucial for fostering an inclusive and non-discriminatory school environment. Such facilitation provides a safe space for all students to express their spirituality without fear of exclusion (Interviews with the Principal of SMAN 1 Garut and the Vice Principal of Student Affairs at SMKN 1 Garut). The schools' anti-bullying and anti-violence campaigns also serve as forms of internalizing anti-radicalism values through everyday practices. This approach is considered more effective because it directly addresses students' psychosocial dimensions. Ghufron et al. found that student participation in social campaigns rejecting both verbal and symbolic violence enhances their moral sensitivity toward the harmful impacts of intolerance (M. A. Ghufron et al., 2024).

As one student leader at SMAN 1 Garut reflected:

I used to think tolerance was only about religious differences, but it also means respecting people who have appearances or views that are different from ours (Interview with a Student Council member, SMAN 1 Garut).

Similarly, a student at SMKN 1 Garut shared:

I once joined a P5 project with the theme Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. In that project, my group created a work about tolerance in the digital world. From that, I learned that tolerance is not only about real life but is also reflected in how we respond to content on social media (Interview with Elsa, student of SMKN 1 Garut).

Unlike SMAN 1, which emphasizes a curricular approach, SMKN 1 Garut develops strategies for internalizing religious moderation values through extracurricular activities. Student organizations such as OSIS (Student Council) and Rohis (Islamic Spirituality Organization) are directed to become open spaces that encourage interreligious and intersocial dialogue. Moderation is established as the guiding principle in every organizational program, such as peace campaigns, public discussions, and interfaith social actions. Jamaluddin found that when moderation values form the foundation of student activities, schools develop an inclusive and non-discriminatory culture. In this context, schools become safe spaces for all students regardless of identity background, which is crucial in showing indications of social segregation among students (Jamaluddin, 2024). An inclusive school culture is further supported by principals with a moderate vision. According to Fuaddah et al. (2024), principals who adopt inclusive

leadership models succeed in fostering an atmosphere that supports diversity and inter-identity interactions in schools. This is reflected in SMKN 1 Garut's "Friends of Different Faiths" program, where students from diverse backgrounds collaborate on art and cultural projects.

One of the most innovative initiatives at SMKN 1 Garut is the development of a digital literacy program for moderation. In this program, students are encouraged to create creative content such as short videos, infographics, and podcasts promoting messages of tolerance and anti-radicalism. This initiative responds to the rise of radical ideology dissemination through digital platforms, especially social media. Slama showed that social media has become a new arena for religious expression in Indonesia, which can be either positive or negative depending on how it is utilized (Slama, 2018). Thus, developing digital literacy based on moderation is crucial for enabling students to act as agents of counter-narratives against the widespread circulation of extremist content.

This digital literacy program is consistent with findings by Dzofir and Nur, who emphasized the importance of digital transformation in Islamic education (Dzofir & M. Nur, 2024). They note that digitalization not only increases access to information but also allows the formation of virtual moderate communities that transcend geographical boundaries. At both SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut, the internalization of religious moderation values is carried out not only explicitly through formal programs but also through the hidden curriculum. Teachers, staff, and principals serve as role models of inclusivity and non-violence in their daily interactions. Such role modeling is proven to be one of the most powerful pedagogical tools in value internalization.

The programs initiated by SMAN 1 Garut and SMKN 1 Garut are presented in the following table.).

**Table 1.** The programs initiated by SMAN 1 Garut and SMKN 1 Garut

No	Focus	SMAN 1 Garut	SMKN 1 Garut	Research Findings
1	Forms, Patterns of Dissemination, and Causal Factors Behind the Emergence of Radicalism Movements	Latent and symbolic forms of radicalism include social exclusivism, sectarian fanaticism, and rejection of national symbols.	Forms of radicalism emerge in ideological-symbolic expressions, such as the delegitimization of the state, religious fanaticism, and discrimination against minority students.	Radicalism in both schools is symbolic-latent in nature, influenced by historical, educational, familial, economic, and digital factors. Its dissemination takes place through social spaces, non-formal forums, and digital

		technologies familiar to adolescents.		
<b>2</b>	<b>The Concept and Implementation of Religious Moderation Values</b>	Moderation is understood as a life paradigm that emphasizes <i>tasamuh</i> (tolerance), <i>tawazun</i> (balance), <i>i'tidal</i> (justice), <i>rahmah</i> (compassion), <i>laa 'unf</i> (non-violence), and <i>hubbul wathan</i> (love for the homeland).	Moderation is understood as an ethical principle internalized within learning, school culture, co-curricular activities, and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5).	The values of religious moderation in both schools are integrated into policies, learning, and school life, making them a preventive strategy against radicalism.
<b>3</b>	<b>The Process of Internalizing</b>	The internalization of moderation values takes place through the cognitive domain (knowledge of diversity and moderate attitudes), the affective domain (empathy, openness, tolerance), and the psychomotor domain (social practices across religious and cultural boundaries).	The internalization is carried out holistically through curricular, pedagogical, and cultural approaches. Strategies include classroom discussions, case studies, social simulations, teacher role modeling, and activities based on the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5). The challenges arise from the influence of social media, family, and students' social environment.	The internalization process in both schools is carried out systematically and comprehensively, encompassing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. The main challenges arise from exposure to digital media and exclusive values within the family environment.
<b>4</b>	<b>Evaluating the Success of Internalizing Religious Moderation Values</b>	The success is reflected in students' attitudes that are more inclusive, tolerant, and critical toward radical narratives. A dialogical school environment and fair policies support students' ideological resilience. However, challenges arise from radical content on social media that influences some students.	The success is evident in students' social behavior, which has become more open, collaborative, and resistant to radical provocations. The schools foster a participatory culture and closely monitor extracurricular Rohis (Islamic spirituality) activities. Similar challenges, however, stem from social media and family environments that remain exclusivist.	The internalization of religious moderation values in both schools has successfully fostered students' ideological resilience, although strengthening digital literacy and collaboration with parents and the community are still required

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The internalization of moderation values does not stop within the school environment but also involves collaboration with local communities and institutional networks. At SMAN 1 Garut, for instance, the school partners with the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) of Garut to organize public discussions and interfaith seminars. Such collaboration strengthens the legitimacy of moderation values by bringing in moral and social authorities from outside the school. As Slama argues, religious narratives gain greater strength when supported by broader social and cultural networks. Building moderation-based community networks, therefore, is key to expanding the reach and impact of tolerance education (Slama, 2017).

The internalization of religious moderation values at SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut shows that different yet complementary approaches curricular-reflective learning on one hand, and extracurricular activities on the other can together create an inclusive, tolerant, and ideologically resilient educational ecosystem. At SMAN 1, PAI learning is developed dialogically and reflectively, encouraging critical thinking, interfaith dialogue, and mutual respect. At SMKN 1, moderation values are internalized through student organizations such as OSIS and Rohis and are reinforced by a school culture that promotes openness to diversity.

The key to success lies in students' active participation in interreligious and intercultural dialogue forums, which are not merely symbolic but substantive in building understanding and empathy toward differences. Moreover, the integration of moderation values into daily school practices through internal regulations, habituation of inclusive attitudes, and social activities makes these values an inherent part of school life. In the digital era, the use of social media and online platforms as counter-narrative tools against radical content also becomes a crucial strategy, engaging students' creativity as agents of change.

Furthermore, the success of these practices strongly depends on the role of school leaders and teachers as inclusive leaders who not only promote tolerance normatively but also model it in their social relations. Finally, cross-institutional collaborations with religious organizations, FKUB, and interfaith schools expand the impact of moderation programs beyond the school walls. Through these strategies, the internalization of moderation values is no longer an abstract concept within the curriculum but has become a lived social and cultural practice within the school community.

### **C. Stage of Internalizing Religious Moderation Values**

The internalization of religious moderation values is a character-building process that does not occur instantly but rather unfolds through a continuous and systematic

sequence of stages. In the context of Islamic education, this process is often described in three main stages: transformation, transaction, and transinternalization. These stages illustrate the shift from conceptual knowledge to personal internalization and practical implementation of values.

The first stage is value transformation, where students are introduced to the basic concepts of religious moderation. This includes an understanding of tolerance, non-violence, respect for diversity, and the importance of national commitment. At this stage, teachers act as the main facilitators in delivering contextual, balanced, and inclusive religious materials.

Religious moderation has a very crucial role. By instilling moderation values, we seek to show indications of the emergence of intolerant and radical attitudes while shaping students' character so that they can respect differences and live harmoniously in a diverse society (Interview with Sumpena Permana Putra, Principal of SMAN 1 Garut).

The same perspective was expressed by the Principal of SMKN 1 Garut:

We want to ensure that students understand that differences are not something that divide us, but rather a richness that strengthens unity. This direct experiential approach to diversity reinforces moderation not merely as a moral instruction, but as a lived social experience constructed within the educational environment (Interview with Pudji Santoso, Principal of SMKN 1 Garut).

According to Mufi, Elhady, and Mursalim, the stage of value transformation is carried out through both formal curricula and hidden curricula, directing students to understand religion as a means of peace rather than conflict (Mufi & Elhady, 2023). This stage becomes the initial foundation to show indications of students from adopting narrow interpretations of religion that may lead to intolerance. Huda further argues that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning plans grounded in moderation values are able to cultivate inclusive ways of thinking from an early stage (Huda, 2022). Teachers may employ problem-based learning and contextual learning approaches to connect religious teachings with students' social realities. The goal of this early stage is not only for students to understand tolerance conceptually, but also to distinguish between pure religious teachings and religious narratives infused with extremist ideology.

The second stage is value transaction, an interactive process in which students experience and test moderation values through various forms of social engagement. Common forms of implementation include group discussions, role plays, interfaith activities, and visits to places of worship of other religions. A study conducted by Susanto et al. revealed that millennial generations displayed stronger understandings of moderation when actively involved in interfaith dialogue and social reflection (Susanto & Dharma, 2022). Participatory forms of moderation education proved to be more

effective in cultivating anti-violence and tolerant attitudes compared to dogmatic approaches.

We accustom students to respecting differences—whether in belief, worship practices, or social perspectives. The value of tasamuh is instilled not only through lessons, but also through daily interactions at school, such as teaching students not to disparage different religious practices and encouraging the use of polite language in discussions. We do not change the substance of the material, but the way it is delivered. The content remains the same, but we insert values of moderation, such as how to respond to differences, how to engage in peaceful dialogue, and how Islam highly upholds pluralism. (Interview with Neneng Nafisah, PAI Teacher, SMAN 1 Garut).

Additionally, Bahdar and Dulumina's study in Sigi, Central Sulawesi, showed that creative media such as Google Classroom, educational radio, and educational games can enhance student participation in experience-based moderation programs (Bahdar et al., 2023). Through this approach, moderation values are not merely taught but are directly experienced by students through meaningful social interactions. Fakhruddin et al. also found that involving students in interfaith dialogue projects and conflict-resolution simulations strengthens the transactional dimension of value internalization, especially in schools with high religious diversity (Fakhruddin et al., 2023).

The final stage is transinternalization, when moderation values are deeply internalized and become part of students' personal identity. At this point, values are no longer only cognitively understood or socially experienced, but are transformed into moral principles embodied in everyday attitudes and behaviors, such as rejecting violence, respecting differences, and promoting peace.

I personally feel happy when invited by teachers to engage in discussions, because we are given the space to express our views openly. From there, I learned that differences of opinion are not something to be disputed, but rather understood and respected (Interview with Zulaikha, Student of SMAN 1 Garut).

Similarly, non-Muslim students at SMKN 1 Garut shared:

At first I felt awkward, but PAI teachers always explained that Islam teaches tolerance, and that made me feel more comfortable. In line with this, Elen, another non-Muslim student, stated: At first I was worried about not being treated equally, but the PAI teachers were very open and never forced Islamic teachings on us (Interviews with Elen and Yohana, Non-Muslim Students, SMKN 1 Garut).

According to Firmansyah et al., the transinternalization stage is marked by students' ability to become agents of social change, for instance by producing digital content that promotes tolerance and diversity (Firmansyah et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Mufi et al. stress that transinternalization is more likely to occur if supported by a school environment that

consistently applies moderation values institutionally through rules, school culture, and teachers' role modeling (Mufi & Elhady, 2023). In the long term, this stage serves as an essential foundation for shaping students' character to be not only passively tolerant but also actively committed to spreading peace in society. Education that reaches the transinternalization stage produces individuals with "ideological immunity" against radical narratives.

Taken together, the three stages of transformation, transaction, and transinternalization form an inseparable process in the education of religious moderation. They provide a conceptual and practical framework that enables values of tolerance and non-violence to truly live within students. With adaptive curricula, reflective teachers, and inclusive learning environments, this process can run effectively and sustainably. It is important to remember that value internalization is not a linear process but rather a dynamic and evolving one. Therefore, the success of moderation education depends heavily on collaboration across stakeholders: government, schools, families, and local communities that collectively support the practice of peaceful religious life.

#### **D. Effectiveness and Challenges of Internalizing Religious Moderation**

The implementation of religious moderation values in schools has shown significant effectiveness in building students' ideological immunity, strengthening inclusive school culture, and reducing the potential for minor social conflicts among students. In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, approaches that combine dialogue-based learning, experiential practice, and the integration of moderation values into the curriculum have successfully created safe spaces for students to express diversity (Jamaluddin, 2024; Rahman, 2024). Programs such as interfaith discussions, anti-bullying campaigns, and value reflection in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) classes have significantly shaped students' awareness of the importance of peaceful coexistence.

Research by Rahman, demonstrates that participatory and reflective moderation learning has a direct impact on increasing students' empathy, tolerance, and critical attitudes toward intolerant narratives (Rahman, 2024). This aligns with the findings of Jamaluddin , who emphasizes that consistent moderate educational approaches can strengthen intercultural and interfaith awareness and reinforce the role of schools as agents of social peace (Jamaluddin, 2024).

In practice, the tangible outcomes of internalizing moderation values can be seen in the decreased intensity of minor conflicts among students from different backgrounds, as well as increased student participation in activities based on inclusivity and collaboration. A school culture that values diversity and prioritizes dialogue becomes an essential factor in strengthening students' identities as tolerant citizens who remain critical of extremism (Aflahah et al., 2023; Suparta, 2024). Nevertheless, the success of

internalization programs also faces significant challenges, both from within the school environment and from external influences, particularly social media and ideological enclaves.

First, ideological enclaves student groups with exclusive religious ideologies that tend to reject interaction with others remain a barrier to building open dialogue spaces. These enclaves reinforce social segregation in schools and distance students from inclusive values instilled through formal education (Samsudin, 2020). The lack of interaction causes moderation values to remain at the formal level without penetrating students' cognitive and affective domains.

Second, the broad and uncontrollable influence of social media presents a major challenge. Intolerant narratives, religious hoaxes, and radical propaganda spread rapidly through digital platforms that are often consumed without critical literacy. Kuswana found that radical groups strategically use social media to target young generations, especially students who lack strong ideological filters (Kuswana, 2024). The challenge is further compounded by the fact that much religious content on social media is packaged in engaging, emotional, and relatable ways, making it more easily accepted than academic or moderate narratives.

Third, teachers' limitations in understanding and integrating digital literacy based on moderation also pose a significant obstacle. Many teachers, especially in rural areas, lack the technical and pedagogical skills needed to develop engaging and relevant digital learning materials suited to students' digital worlds (Ichwan et al., 2024). In addition, the absence of specialized training on religious moderation in digital contexts makes it difficult for teachers to become effective agents of change both in the classroom and online. Jamaluddin stresses that the success of value internalization depends heavily on teachers' capacity to deliver moderation creatively and contextually (Jamaluddin, 2024). Thus, investing in teacher training, developing digital moderation curricula, and improving ICT facilities in schools are crucial steps to overcoming these challenges.

To address these challenges, several structured and sustainable strategies need to be implemented. First, strengthening teacher learning communities is an important starting point. Through continuous training on religious moderation and digital pedagogy based on tolerance values, teachers can become the main agents of change who not only transfer knowledge but also instill values contextually and engagingly. Second, collaboration with moderate religious organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah can help produce digital educational content that is relevant and accessible to students. One example is NU's Merah Putih vs. Radikalisme program, which has proven effective as a counter-narrative tool on social media (Kuswana, 2024).

Third, the development of internal school media is crucial, such as podcasts, school YouTube channels, and digital campaigns produced by students and teachers. These

contents can creatively and communicatively address issues of tolerance, diversity, and non-violence, while also expanding the reach of moderation beyond the school environment. Fourth, a participatory monitoring and evaluation system is needed to regularly measure program effectiveness. Such assessments can track how deeply moderation values are embedded in students' behavior, both in their daily school interactions and in their digital activities. By implementing these strategic measures, schools can function not only as formal educational institutions but also as social fortresses against the spread of radicalism. Furthermore, schools become fertile grounds for cultivating humanistic values, tolerance, and harmony—values that are urgently needed in Indonesia's multicultural society.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

This study examines the internalization of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut as a strategy against radicalism. Radicalism emerges symbolically through exclusivism, intolerant narratives, and biased digital media. Factors such as identity crises, social segregation, and the weakening of formal religious authority influence this process. The study finds that religious moderation has been successfully internalized through dialogical and collaborative approaches in PAI, shaping tolerant, just, and non-violent character. Despite this, challenges remain, including ideological enclaves and limited affective approaches. Holistic, experience-based pedagogical strategies and inclusive environments are crucial for the sustainability of these values. This study is limited by its focus on only two schools, which may not fully represent broader regional or national trends. Additionally, the analysis does not explore the long-term impact of these internalization processes beyond the school environment.

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