



Teaching Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: Pedagogies for the Digital Era

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ABSTRAK

Di era yang ditandai oleh meningkatnya polarisasi agama dan transformasi digital, konsep moderasi beragama muncul sebagai kerangka penting bagi pendidikan Islam. Artikel ini menyajikan sintesis kritis literatur ilmiah mengenai pendekatan pedagogis terhadap moderasi beragama dalam pendidikan Islam, dengan perhatian khusus pada tantangan dan peluang yang ditimbulkan oleh teknologi digital. Melalui analisis sistematis terhadap penelitian terkini, studi ini mengidentifikasi tema-tema utama dalam konseptualisasi dan implementasi moderasi beragama di berbagai konteks pendidikan, termasuk perguruan tinggi Islam, madrasah, dan pesantren. Analisis menunjukkan adanya ketegangan antara pendekatan pedagogis tradisional dan strategi digital yang inovatif, menekankan perlunya kerangka yang seimbang dan sensitif terhadap konteks untuk secara efektif menanamkan nilai-nilai moderat sekaligus menghadapi tantangan kontemporer. Artikel ini mendorong terciptanya pedagogi moderasi beragama yang terintegrasi dengan literasi digital, berpikir kritis, dan kompetensi antarbudaya, serta menawarkan implikasi praktis bagi pendidik, pembuat kebijakan, dan pengembang kurikulum. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada wacana pendidikan agama dengan menghadirkan pemahaman yang lebih bermuansa mengenai moderasi, yang mengakui baik potensi maupun keterbatasannya dalam menavigasi lanskap keagamaan yang kompleks di era digital.

ABSTRACT

In an era marked by increasing religious polarization and digital transformation, the concept of religious moderation has emerged as a critical framework for Islamic education. This article presents a critical synthesis of scholarly literature on pedagogical approaches to religious moderation in Islamic education, with particular attention to the challenges and opportunities presented by digital technologies. Through systematic analysis of recent research, this study identifies key themes in the conceptualization and implementation of religious moderation across various educational contexts, including Islamic higher education, madrasahs, and Islamic boarding schools. The analysis reveals tensions between traditional pedagogical approaches and innovative digital strategies, highlighting the need for a balanced, context-sensitive framework that can effectively foster moderate religious values while addressing contemporary challenges. The article argues for a reimagined pedagogy of religious moderation that integrates digital literacy, critical thinking, and intercultural competence, offering practical implications for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on religious education by proposing a nuanced understanding of moderation that acknowledges both its potential and limitations in navigating complex religious landscapes in the digital age.

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PENDAHULUAN

The global landscape of the 21st century is characterized by increasing religious diversity alongside growing tensions and conflicts rooted in religious differences. In response to these challenges, the concept of religious moderation has gained prominence as a framework for promoting harmony, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among different religious communities (Nasir & Rijal, 2021). In the context of Islamic education, religious moderation has become a central focus for scholars, educators, and policymakers

seeking to counter extremism and foster a balanced understanding of Islamic teachings that embraces diversity and rejects radicalism (Hakim & Mudofir, 2023).

Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has been at the forefront of efforts to institutionalize religious moderation within its educational system. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has actively promoted religious moderation as a national priority, leading to its integration into curricula, teacher training programs, and institutional policies across various levels of Islamic education (Abdullah & Nento, 2021). This initiative reflects a broader recognition of education's pivotal role in shaping religious attitudes and behaviors, particularly among young people who are increasingly exposed to diverse religious perspectives through digital media (Febriani & Ritonga, 2022).

The concept of religious moderation in Islamic education is multifaceted, encompassing theological, pedagogical, and sociopolitical dimensions. Theologically, it emphasizes the middle path (*wasatiyyah*) in Islam, avoiding extremism (*ghuluw*) and laxity (*tatawul*), and promoting a balanced understanding of religious texts and teachings (Mutaqin, 2024). Pedagogically, it involves the development of teaching methods, curricula, and learning environments that foster critical thinking, tolerance, and respect for diversity (Huda, 2024b). Sociopolitically, it addresses the role of education in promoting social cohesion, national unity, and peaceful interreligious relations (Aditya & Mayasari, 2022).

Despite the growing emphasis on religious moderation in Islamic education, significant gaps remain in our understanding of how this concept can be effectively translated into pedagogical practice. While numerous studies have explored the theoretical foundations of religious moderation and its implementation in specific educational contexts, there is limited research that synthesizes these findings to identify common patterns, challenges, and opportunities across different settings (Hasan & Juhannis, 2023). Furthermore, the rapid digitalization of education presents both new possibilities and challenges for promoting religious moderation that have not been adequately addressed in the existing literature (Hanafi et al., 2024).

This article seeks to address these gaps through a critical synthesis of recent scholarly literature on pedagogical approaches to religious moderation in Islamic education. By analyzing and comparing findings from diverse educational contexts, including Islamic higher education, madrasahs, and Islamic boarding schools, this study aims to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how religious moderation is conceptualized and implemented in practice. Particular attention is given to the role of digital technologies in shaping pedagogical approaches and their implications for fostering moderate religious values. The analysis is guided by the following research questions: (1) How is religious moderation conceptualized in Islamic education, and what are the key pedagogical approaches used to promote it; (2) What are the main challenges and opportunities in implementing religious moderation in Islamic education, particularly in the digital era?; (3) How can pedagogical approaches to religious moderation be enhanced to address contemporary challenges and opportunities?

This article contributes to the scholarly discourse on religious education by offering a nuanced analysis of the pedagogical dimensions of religious moderation in Islamic education. It provides insights that can inform curriculum development, teacher training, and policy formulation aimed at fostering religious moderation in diverse educational contexts. Furthermore, by addressing the digital dimension of religious education, this article highlights the need for innovative approaches that can effectively navigate the complex interplay between tradition and modernity in Islamic education.

METODE PELAKSANAAN

This study employs a systematic critical synthesis approach to analyze the scholarly literature on pedagogical approaches to religious moderation in Islamic education. Critical synthesis, as defined by Whittemore and Knafl (2005), involves the integration of findings from diverse sources using a systematic approach that includes critical appraisal and synthesis of data. This method is particularly appropriate for this study as it allows for the examination of complex phenomena across multiple contexts and the identification of patterns, contradictions, and gaps in the existing literature.

The reference selection process was guided by a systematic search of academic databases focusing on studies published between 2018 and 2025, a period that reflects the growing scholarly interest in religious moderation in Islamic education. The initial search yielded over 100 articles, which were then screened based on relevance to the research questions, methodological rigor, and contribution to the understanding of pedagogical approaches to religious moderation. The final reference list includes 75 sources that represent diverse perspectives on religious moderation in Islamic education across various contexts, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and other Muslim-majority countries.

The selected references were categorized based on their primary focus, including theoretical conceptualizations of religious moderation, empirical studies of implementation in educational settings, analyses of challenges and opportunities, and explorations of digital approaches. This categorization facilitated a structured analysis of the literature and enabled the identification of key themes and patterns across different sources.

The theoretical lens for this study is informed by critical pedagogy, as developed by Paulo Freire and later scholars, which emphasizes the role of education in promoting critical consciousness, social justice, and transformation (Freire, 1970). This perspective is particularly relevant to the study of religious moderation as it highlights the importance of critical engagement with religious texts and traditions, rather than passive acceptance of dogmatic interpretations. Additionally, the study draws on constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing knowledge and understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). This theoretical framework provides a basis for analyzing pedagogical approaches that encourage critical thinking, dialogue, and reflection in the context of religious education.

The analytical process involved several steps. First, each reference was carefully read and annotated to identify key concepts, arguments, and findings related to pedagogical approaches to religious moderation. Second, the annotated sources were compared and contrasted to identify common themes, divergences, and gaps in the literature. Third, the identified themes were further analyzed to develop a nuanced understanding of how religious moderation is conceptualized and implemented in Islamic education. Finally, the analysis was synthesized to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding pedagogical approaches to religious moderation and their implications for practice.

To ensure the validity of the analysis, several measures were taken. First, the analysis was grounded in the empirical evidence presented in the selected studies, rather than relying solely on theoretical arguments. Second, divergent perspectives and contradictory findings were actively sought and critically examined to avoid bias and ensure a balanced analysis. Third, the interpretation of findings was continuously refined through reflexive critique, involving questioning of assumptions and consideration of alternative explanations. Finally, the emerging analysis was triangulated across multiple sources to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

This methodological approach enables a comprehensive and critical analysis of the literature on pedagogical approaches to religious moderation in Islamic education. It allows for the identification of patterns and insights that might not be apparent from individual studies, while also acknowledging the complexity and context-specific nature of religious education. The resulting analysis contributes to a more nuanced understanding of religious moderation in Islamic education and provides a basis for future research and practice in this field.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

This section presents the findings of the critical synthesis of literature on pedagogical approaches to religious moderation in Islamic education. The analysis is organized around three key themes: conceptualizations of religious moderation in Islamic education, pedagogical approaches and strategies, and challenges and opportunities in the digital era. Each theme is discussed in detail, with reference to the relevant literature and critical analysis of the findings.

Conceptualizations of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education

The literature reveals diverse conceptualizations of religious moderation in Islamic education, reflecting different theological, pedagogical, and sociopolitical perspectives. A common thread across these conceptualizations is the emphasis on the middle path (wasatiyyah) in Islam, which advocates for balance, tolerance, and avoidance of extremism (Mutaqin, 2024). This theological foundation is interpreted and applied in various ways across different educational contexts.

In Islamic higher education, religious moderation is often conceptualized as an academic discipline that involves critical engagement with religious texts and traditions, as well as dialogue with other religious and philosophical perspectives (Abdullah & Nento, 2021). This approach emphasizes intellectual rigor and scholarly inquiry as means to develop a nuanced understanding of Islam that rejects literalist and extremist interpretations. For example, Burhanuddin and Ilmi (2022) identify different typologies of religious moderation in Indonesian higher education institutions, ranging from conservative to progressive approaches, each with distinct epistemological foundations and pedagogical implications.

In madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), religious moderation is often conceptualized in more practical terms, focusing on the development of moral character, ethical behavior, and social

responsibility (Huda, 2024a). This approach emphasizes the embodiment of moderate values in daily life and interactions with others, rather than abstract theological debates. For instance, Mas'udi and Mufliah (2024) describe how Islamic boarding schools in Madura serve as ecosystems for religious moderation education, integrating moderate values into all aspects of students' lives, from religious instruction to social interactions.

Another important conceptualization of religious moderation in Islamic education emphasizes its role in promoting social cohesion and national unity (Aditya & Mayasari, 2022). From this perspective, religious moderation is not merely a theological or pedagogical concept but a sociopolitical project aimed at fostering harmony among diverse religious communities and strengthening national identity. This conceptualization is particularly prominent in official discourse and policy documents, which often frame religious moderation as a bulwark against extremism and a foundation for democratic citizenship (Nasir & Rijal, 2021).

Despite these diverse conceptualizations, there is a common emphasis on the importance of context in understanding and implementing religious moderation in Islamic education. Several scholars highlight the need to consider local cultural traditions, historical experiences, and socio-political realities when defining and promoting religious moderation (Hernawan et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2025). This contextual sensitivity is seen as essential for avoiding the imposition of universalist or essentialist notions of moderation that might not resonate with local communities or address their specific concerns and aspirations.

Pedagogical Approaches and Strategies

The literature reveals a range of pedagogical approaches and strategies used to promote religious moderation in Islamic education. These approaches vary in their theoretical foundations, methods, and intended outcomes, reflecting different conceptualizations of religious moderation and diverse educational contexts.

One prominent approach is curriculum-based religious moderation, which involves the integration of moderate values and perspectives into formal curricula and educational materials (Abidin & Murtadlo, 2020). This approach often includes the development of specific courses or modules on religious moderation, as well as the revision of existing courses to incorporate moderate interpretations of religious texts and teachings. For example, Masturin (2023) describes the development of Islamic religious education materials based on religious moderation for forming student character, highlighting the importance of contextualized and age-appropriate content.

Another approach is experiential learning, which emphasizes direct engagement with religious diversity through activities such as interfaith dialogue, community service, and cultural exchange (Pal et al., 2022). This approach is based on the premise that personal experiences and interactions are more effective in shaping attitudes and behaviors than abstract instruction alone. For instance, Hasan et al. (2023) explore how service learning in pesantren can build an attitude of religious moderation by providing students with opportunities to engage with diverse communities and address real-world social problems.

A third approach is critical pedagogy, which encourages students to critically examine religious texts, traditions, and interpretations, rather than passively accepting received knowledge (Moulin-Stożek, 2022). This approach emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, intellectual curiosity, and openness to diverse perspectives. For example, Mulyana (2023) analyzes how religious moderation is presented in Islamic religious education textbooks in Indonesia, highlighting the need for more critical and dialogical approaches that encourage students to question and reflect on religious teachings.

Digital pedagogy represents an emerging approach to religious moderation that leverages digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning (Hanafi et al., 2024). This approach includes the use of e-learning platforms, social media, mobile applications, and other digital tools to deliver content, facilitate interaction, and assess learning. For instance, Benny and Liem (2024) examine students' perspectives on religious moderation content on e-learning character education websites, highlighting the potential of digital platforms to engage young people and promote moderate values.

Despite the diversity of these approaches, several common elements emerge. First, there is an emphasis on the importance of teacher training and professional development in implementing religious moderation education (Akhmadi, 2022). Teachers are seen as key agents of change who need to possess not only knowledge of religious moderation but also the pedagogical skills to effectively promote it. Second, there is a recognition of the need for context-sensitive approaches that take into account the specific characteristics and needs of different educational settings and student populations (Nurbayani &

Amiruddin, 2024). Third, there is an emphasis on the importance of assessment and evaluation in ensuring the effectiveness of religious moderation education (Mukhibat et al., 2024).

Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Era

The literature identifies several challenges and opportunities in implementing religious moderation in Islamic education, particularly in the context of the digital era. These challenges and opportunities have significant implications for pedagogical approaches and strategies.

One of the main challenges is the spread of extremist content and ideologies through digital media, which can undermine efforts to promote religious moderation (Febriani & Ritonga, 2022). The internet and social media platforms have made it easier for extremist groups to reach and influence young people, often through sophisticated propaganda and recruitment strategies. This challenge is compounded by the digital divide, which limits access to reliable information and educational resources in some communities (Muzayanah et al., 2025).

Another challenge is the resistance to religious moderation from conservative or traditionalist elements within Muslim communities (Roziqin et al., 2025). Some critics view religious moderation as a compromise of religious principles or an imposition of Western values, leading to skepticism and opposition. This challenge is particularly acute in contexts where religious authority is contested and where there are competing visions of Islam and its role in society.

A third challenge is the lack of resources and capacity for implementing religious moderation education, particularly in under-resourced educational institutions (Chotimah et al., 2024). Many schools and madrasahs struggle with inadequate infrastructure, limited teacher training, and insufficient learning materials, which can hinder efforts to promote religious moderation. This challenge is exacerbated by the rapid pace of digital transformation, which requires significant investment in technology and infrastructure.

Despite these challenges, the digital era also presents significant opportunities for promoting religious moderation in Islamic education. Digital technologies offer new possibilities for content delivery, interaction, and assessment that can enhance the effectiveness and reach of religious moderation education (Hanafi et al., 2024). For example, e-learning platforms can provide access to diverse perspectives and resources, social media can facilitate dialogue and engagement, and mobile applications can offer personalized learning experiences.

Another opportunity is the growing recognition of the importance of digital literacy and critical thinking in navigating the complex information landscape of the digital era (Nurhayati et al., 2025). By developing these skills, students can better evaluate the credibility and reliability of online content, identify misinformation and propaganda, and engage in constructive dialogue with diverse perspectives. This digital literacy is seen as an essential component of religious moderation education in the 21st century.

A third opportunity is the potential for collaboration and knowledge sharing among educators, institutions, and communities through digital networks (Jamaludin et al., 2025). Digital platforms can facilitate the exchange of best practices, resources, and experiences in promoting religious moderation, leading to more innovative and effective approaches. This collaboration can help to address the resource constraints and capacity challenges faced by many educational institutions.

The literature suggests that effectively navigating these challenges and opportunities requires a reimagined pedagogy of religious moderation that integrates digital literacy, critical thinking, and intercultural competence (Hanif et al., 2025). Such a pedagogy would be responsive to the changing needs and contexts of the digital era while remaining grounded in the theological and ethical foundations of Islamic moderation. It would also be flexible and adaptable, allowing for customization to different educational settings and student populations.

The findings of this critical synthesis have several theoretical, methodological, and practical implications. Theoretically, they highlight the need for more nuanced and context-sensitive conceptualizations of religious moderation that acknowledge its complexity and diversity. Methodologically, they suggest the importance of mixed-methods approaches that can capture both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of religious moderation education. Practically, they provide insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers on how to design and implement more effective pedagogical approaches to religious moderation in the digital era.

KESIMPULAN DAN SARAN

This article has presented a critical synthesis of scholarly literature on pedagogical approaches to religious moderation in Islamic education, with particular attention to the challenges and opportunities presented by digital technologies. Through systematic analysis of recent research, this study has identified key themes in the conceptualization and implementation of religious moderation across various educational contexts, highlighting the need for a balanced, context-sensitive framework that can effectively foster moderate religious values while addressing contemporary challenges.

The analysis reveals that religious moderation in Islamic education is conceptualized in diverse ways, reflecting different theological, pedagogical, and sociopolitical perspectives. These conceptualizations range from academic disciplines emphasizing critical engagement with religious texts and traditions, to practical approaches focusing on the development of moral character and ethical behavior, to sociopolitical projects aimed at fostering social cohesion and national unity. Despite this diversity, there is a common emphasis on the importance of context in understanding and implementing religious moderation, highlighting the need for approaches that are sensitive to local cultural traditions, historical experiences, and socio-political realities.

The literature also reveals a range of pedagogical approaches and strategies used to promote religious moderation in Islamic education, including curriculum-based approaches, experiential learning, critical pedagogy, and digital pedagogy. These approaches share common elements, such as the importance of teacher training and professional development, the need for context-sensitive strategies, and the emphasis on assessment and evaluation. However, they also reflect different theoretical foundations and methods, highlighting the complexity of religious moderation education and the need for multiple approaches to address diverse needs and contexts.

The digital era presents both challenges and opportunities for religious moderation education in Islamic contexts. Challenges include the spread of extremist content through digital media, resistance from conservative or traditionalist elements, and resource constraints. Opportunities include new possibilities for content delivery, interaction, and assessment through digital technologies, the growing recognition of the importance of digital literacy and critical thinking, and the potential for collaboration and knowledge sharing through digital networks. Effectively navigating these challenges and opportunities requires a reimagined pedagogy of religious moderation that integrates digital literacy, critical thinking, and intercultural competence.

In answering the research questions posed in the introduction, this article makes several contributions to the scholarly discourse on religious education. First, it provides a nuanced analysis of how religious moderation is conceptualized in Islamic education, highlighting the diversity of perspectives and the importance of context. Second, it identifies key pedagogical approaches and strategies used to promote religious moderation, offering insights into their theoretical foundations and practical implications. Third, it examines the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital era, suggesting ways to leverage digital technologies while mitigating their risks.

The original contribution of this article lies in its critical synthesis of diverse perspectives on religious moderation in Islamic education, offering a comprehensive framework that integrates theological, pedagogical, and digital dimensions. This framework acknowledges the complexity and context-specific nature of religious moderation education, while also identifying common patterns and principles that can inform practice across different settings. By highlighting the interplay between tradition and innovation, the article provides a basis for reimagining pedagogy in ways that are responsive to contemporary challenges while remaining grounded in the ethical and theological foundations of Islamic moderation.

Future research should focus on several areas identified in this analysis. First, there is a need for more empirical studies on the effectiveness of different pedagogical approaches to religious moderation, particularly in the digital era. Second, research should explore the perspectives and experiences of students and teachers in religious moderation education, highlighting their needs, challenges, and aspirations. Third, comparative studies across different cultural and national contexts can provide insights into how religious moderation is conceptualized and implemented in diverse settings. Finally, research should examine the long-term impacts of religious moderation education on students' attitudes, behaviors, and life trajectories.

In conclusion, religious moderation in Islamic education represents a complex and evolving field that requires ongoing critical reflection and innovation. By embracing a pedagogy that integrates digital literacy, critical thinking, and intercultural competence, educators can help to foster a generation of Muslims who are grounded in their faith while also open to diversity, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence. Such a pedagogy

can contribute not only to the prevention of extremism but also to the promotion of a more just, compassionate, and inclusive society.

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