

Research Article

# Moderation Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education

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**Abstract :** Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has a strategic role in shaping the character of students who are religious, tolerant, and have noble morals. Amidst the reality of Indonesian multicultural society, PAI learning is required to be able to internalize the values of religious moderation as an effort to prevent extreme, radical, and intolerant attitudes. Religious moderation is an important paradigm in Islamic education to instill a balanced and contextual religious attitude. This proceedings article aims to examine the concept, strategy, and implications of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education learning through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The SLR method is used to examine journal articles, scientific books, and proceedings relevant to the topic of PAI learning and religious moderation in the last ten years. The results of the study indicate that moderation-based PAI learning is based on the values of wasathiyah, tawazun, i'tidal, and tasamuh which are integrated into the curriculum, learning methods, and the role models of educators. The implementation of moderation-based PAI learning has a positive impact on the formation of inclusive, tolerant attitudes and the ability to live peacefully together in students. This article is expected to be an academic reference for educators and researchers in developing Islamic Religious Education learning that is relevant to the social challenges and diversity of Indonesian society.

**Keywords:** Character Education; Islamic Religious Education; Multicultural Education; Religious Moderation; Wasathiyah Values.

## 1. Background

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a crucial component of the national education system, aiming to shape students into individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals. PAI serves not only as a means of transferring religious knowledge but also as a vehicle for internalizing Islamic values, reflected in everyday attitudes and behaviors (Muhaimin, 2020). Therefore, Islamic Religious Education learning has a big responsibility in building religious character that is in line with humanitarian and national values.

Globalization and advances in information technology present new challenges for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The unstoppable flow of information allows for the influx of various religious beliefs, including those of an extreme and intolerant nature. This situation has the potential to influence students' religious mindsets and attitudes if not balanced with moderate and contextual PAI learning (Tilaar, 2015).

Religious moderation is a strategic approach to addressing these challenges. Religious moderation is understood as a just, balanced, and moderate religious attitude in understanding and practicing religious teachings. In Islam, religious moderation aligns with the concept of ummatan wasathan, which positions Muslims as a middle ground (Shihab, 2019).

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning demands a shift from doctrinal learning to dialogical, reflective, and contextual learning. PAI teachers are required to possess a broad understanding of Islam and pedagogical skills that support the strengthening of values of tolerance and respect for differences.

Based on this background, this article aims to examine moderation-based Islamic Religious Education learning through a Systematic Literature Review approach to obtain a comprehensive conceptual and implementative picture.

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## 2. Theoretical Study

Religious moderation in Islam is a fundamental principle inherent in Islamic teachings. Terminologically, religious moderation refers to a religious attitude that is in the middle path, neither excessive (*ifrāṭ*) nor underestimating religious teachings (*tafrīṭ*). In Islamic tradition, this concept is known as *wasathiyah*, which means balance, justice, and proportionality in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings (Al-Qaradawi, 2010). The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the moderate character of Muslims through Allah's words in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143, which refers to Muslims as *ummatan wasathan*, namely a just and balanced people. This verse emphasizes that moderation is not a compromising concept that weakens faith, but rather the ideal identity of Muslims who place religious teachings fairly in all aspects of life. Thus, religious moderation is a form of obedience to authentic Islamic teachings.

The essence of religious moderation in Islam is also reflected in the balance between spiritual and social dimensions. Islam emphasizes not only ritual worship such as prayer, fasting, and zakat, but also humanitarian values such as justice, compassion, and social concern. Individual piety without social piety is considered not to fully reflect Islamic teachings (Madjid, 2019). Religious moderation exists to maintain a balance between the relationship between humans and God (*hablum minallah*) and the relationship between humans and others (*hablum minannas*). Furthermore, religious moderation in Islam rejects extremism and radicalism in understanding religious texts. Extreme attitudes often arise from a rigid textual understanding without considering the historical and social context. Islam itself prohibits excessive religious behavior (*ghuluw*), as emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in various hadiths warning his followers against extreme attitudes because they can lead to destruction (Al-Bukhari, 2015). Therefore, religious moderation demands a comprehensive and contextual understanding of Islam.

The essence of religious moderation is also reflected in an attitude of tolerance (*tasāmuh*) toward differences. Differences in religious views, schools of thought, and practices in Islam are a historical and intellectual inevitability. Classical scholars have demonstrated mutual respect for differences of opinion (*ikhtilaf*), without misleading or denouncing each other as infidels (Rahman, 2024). Religious moderation teaches that differences are not a threat to faith, but rather an intellectual treasure that enriches the treasury of Islamic thought. In a social context, religious moderation necessitates an open attitude toward religious and cultural diversity. Islam recognizes plurality as a divine law, as affirmed in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, that humans were created different so that they may know one another. This verse serves as the theological foundation for developing mutual respect and peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society.

A concrete example of religious moderation can be found in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), particularly in establishing the community of Medina. Through the Medina Charter, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) upheld the principles of justice, equal rights, and tolerance between religious communities (Azra, 2021). This demonstrates that religious moderation is not merely a normative concept but also a social practice that has been implemented throughout Islamic history.

Thus, the essence of religious moderation in Islam is an effort to balance Islamic teachings between text and context, between faith and humanity, and between the ideals of the teachings and social reality. Religious moderation is not a compromise on faith, but rather a manifestation of a holistic, wise, and humane understanding of Islam. Therefore, religious moderation is a crucial foundation for the development of Islamic Religious Education in formal educational institutions.

## 3. Research Methods

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to systematically and comprehensively examine moderation-based Islamic Religious Education learning. The SLR method allows researchers to identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous research findings in a structured manner. The SLR stages include formulating the study focus, literature search, source selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, data analysis, and synthesis of the study results. The literature search was conducted through the Google Scholar database, DOAJ, and accredited national journals. Inclusion criteria include journal articles, scientific books, and proceedings discussing Islamic Religious Education, religious moderation, and Islamic learning published between 2014–2024. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria include sources that are irrelevant or lack methodological

clarity (Creswell, JW, & Creswell, JD, 2017). Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to identify the main themes, learning patterns, and implications of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education learning. The results of the analysis are then presented narratively.

#### 4. Results And Discussion

##### **Moderation-Based Islamic Education Learning Implementation Strategy**

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a learning paradigm that places the values of religious moderation as the primary foundation of the Islamic education process. This learning is not solely oriented toward mastering normative religious knowledge, but also directed toward developing students' religious perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors that are balanced, tolerant, just, and civilized (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Thus, moderation-based Islamic Education learning emphasizes integration between understanding Islamic teachings and the social realities faced by students.

Conceptually, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is a pedagogical response to contemporary religious challenges, such as the rise of intolerance, radicalism, and exclusivism in understanding religion. PAI learning that is solely textual, dogmatic, and one-way has the potential to produce narrow and rigid religious understandings. Therefore, a moderate approach is crucial to direct PAI learning to be more dialogical, contextual, and humanistic without neglecting the basic principles of Islamic teachings (Hasan, 2020).

In moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, Islamic teachings are understood as a value system that emphasizes balance (*tawazun*) between the dimensions of faith, sharia, and morals. Students are encouraged to understand that Islam governs not only the relationship between humans and God but also their relationships with each other and their environment. This understanding forms the basis for developing a non-exclusive religious attitude and fostering peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society.

From a pedagogical perspective, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (ISE) positions students as active subjects in the learning process. Teachers no longer act as the sole source of truth, but rather as facilitators, guides, and role models, creating a dialogic and reflective learning environment. Students are given space to ask questions, discuss, and express opinions based on rational and ethical arguments. This approach aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through interaction and learning experiences.

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning also emphasizes the importance of respecting differences of opinion (*ikhtilaf*) in Islam. Differences in school of thought, worship practices, and religious thought are understood as part of the intellectual dynamics of Islam that have persisted throughout history (Rahman, 2024). Students are taught that differences are not an excuse to mislead one another, but rather a means to broaden horizons and strengthen tolerance. Thus, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning serves as an educational vehicle that fosters mutual respect and humility in religion. Furthermore, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning requires integration between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Students are not only required to understand Islamic concepts theoretically but are also expected to internalize the values of moderation in practical attitudes and behaviors, such as being fair, respecting differences, and rejecting violence in the name of religion. In other words, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is oriented toward the formation of a holistic religious character.

In the context of national education, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning holds a strategic position as a means of strengthening religious moderation in educational institutions. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia emphasizes that religious education must be at the forefront of fostering peaceful and inclusive religious attitudes. Therefore, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning cannot be understood merely as a methodological innovation, but as a comprehensive educational paradigm.

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning also encourages students to be critical of various contemporary socio-religious issues. Students are encouraged to analyze the phenomena of intolerance, hate speech, and radicalism using the perspective of Islamic teachings, which are *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all the

universe). This approach aims to build awareness that Islamic teachings are strongly relevant to maintaining peace and social justice (Nata, 2018).

Thus, the definition of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education learning can be formulated as a PAI learning process that consciously and systematically integrates wasathiyah values into learning objectives, materials, methods, and evaluations to shape students' understanding, attitudes, and behaviors regarding religious diversity that are balanced, tolerant, contextual, and oriented towards the common good. This learning is not only oriented towards achieving academic goals, but also towards developing students' character as moderate Muslims with noble morals and able to live harmoniously in diversity.

### **Conceptual Foundations of Moderation-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning**

The conceptual foundation of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is a theoretical foundation that emphasizes that the moderate approach to religion is not merely a pragmatic concept, but rather has a strong foundation in Islamic teachings, educational philosophy, and modern pedagogical theory. This foundation serves as a crucial foundation for moderation-based PAI learning to have theological legitimacy, a clear philosophical direction, and pedagogical relevance in learning practices in formal educational institutions (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020).

#### ***Theological Foundation***

The theological foundation of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning stems from the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, which emphasize the principles of balance, justice, and tolerance in religion. The concept of wasathiyah, the core of religious moderation, is explicitly stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 143, which states that Muslims are a just and balanced community. This verse demonstrates that moderation is not an alternative option but rather the ideal character of Muslims. Furthermore, the Qur'an affirms the recognition of diversity as a sunnatullah (God's will). Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, explains that differences in ethnicity, nation, and culture are intended to enable humans to understand one another, not to eliminate one another. In an educational context, this verse serves as an important theological basis for instilling an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect through Islamic Religious Education (Shihab, 2018).

The theological foundation of religious moderation is also reinforced by the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which prohibits excessive religious practices (ghuluw). In a hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that extreme religious practices can lead to destruction. Therefore, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is aimed at developing a proportional understanding of Islam, not merely textual, nor ignoring normative religious values. The practice of religious moderation is also reflected in the Prophet Muhammad's exemplary leadership in managing the pluralistic society of Medina. The Medina Charter serves as historical evidence that Islam teaches a just and peaceful coexistence amidst religious and cultural differences. Therefore, the theological foundation of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is firmly grounded in Islamic teachings (Azra, 2021).

#### ***Philosophical Basis***

Philosophically, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is based on views on the nature of humans, the essence of knowledge, and the goals of Islamic education. Humans are viewed as holistic beings with physical, spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions. Islamic education aims to shape the perfect human being, that is, humans who develop in balance across all aspects of their lives. Religious moderation, from a philosophical perspective, serves as a balancing principle that prevents Islamic education from extreme attitudes, whether overly rationalistic or overly dogmatic. Islamic education should not be trapped in a dichotomy between religious knowledge and general knowledge, between revelation and reason. Instead, Islamic education must be able to integrate the two harmoniously (Rahman, 2024).

The philosophical foundation of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning also aligns with the perspective of religious humanism, which positions humans as subjects of education with the potential for optimal development. Islamic education aims not only to produce individuals who are ritually pious, but also individuals who possess social sensitivity, moral responsibility, and a commitment to humanitarian

values (Madjid, 2019). Therefore, religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has a strong philosophical foundation as an effort to establish a balance between the ideals of Islamic teachings and the realities of human life. Moderation is a guiding principle for Islamic education to remain relevant and meaningful in the context of modern society.

### ***Pedagogical Foundation***

From a pedagogical perspective, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning aligns with modern learning theories that emphasize the active role of students in the learning process. The constructivist approach views knowledge as being built through interaction, experience, and reflection, rather than simply being transferred one-way from teacher to student (Joyce, Bruce, et al. 2015). Therefore, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning requires dialogic, participatory, and reflective learning methods.

In moderation-based learning, Islamic Religious Education teachers act as facilitators and role models, creating a democratic and inclusive learning climate. Students are given space to express their opinions, ask questions, and discuss various religious issues openly and responsibly. This approach helps students develop critical thinking skills and a tolerant attitude.

The pedagogical foundation of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning also emphasizes the importance of integrating the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Learning is not only oriented toward mastery of material but also toward developing attitudes and behaviors that reflect diverse moderate values. Therefore, evaluation of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning must encompass aspects of students' knowledge, attitudes, and social skills. Furthermore, the pedagogical approach of religious moderation is relevant to the demands of character education, which is a national agenda. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning contributes to building the character of students who are religious, tolerant, democratic, and responsible. Thus, this pedagogical foundation strengthens the position of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning as a relevant and applicable approach in education (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020).

### **Characteristics of Moderation-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning**

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has unique characteristics that reflect the paradigm of Islamic education that is inclusive, balanced, and oriented towards the formation of civilized student character. These characteristics emerged in response to global and local challenges in the form of increasing intolerance, radicalism, and religious exclusivism, which often stem from a narrow and ahistorical understanding of religion. Therefore, moderation-based PAI learning functions not only as a means of transferring Islamic knowledge but also as an instrument for transforming religious values and attitudes. The characteristics of moderation-based PAI learning are reflected in the learning objectives, pedagogical approach, material delivery strategies, teacher-student relationships, and orientation towards learning outcomes. All of these characteristics are based on the principle of *wasathiyah*, which emphasizes balance, justice, and universal humanity as the core teachings of Islam (Al-Qaradawi, 2010).

### **Oriented to the Principle of Balance (Tawazun) in Understanding and Practicing Religion**

A fundamental characteristic of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is its orientation toward the principle of balance (*tawazun*). Balance is defined as moderation in understanding and practicing religious teachings, both in theological, ritual, and social aspects. Students are guided to understand Islam comprehensively, paying attention to the integration of faith, knowledge, and good deeds. In learning practice, the principle of balance is realized through the delivery of material that emphasizes not only the legal aspect (*fiqh*) but also the ethical dimension (*akhlak*) and spirituality. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning avoids legalistic tendencies that only emphasize what is permissible (*halal*) and what is forbidden (*haram*) without developing students' moral and social awareness. Thus, students are not trapped in religious formalism but are able to grasp the substance of Islamic values.

Balance is also reflected in the relationship between text and context. Students are guided to understand verses of the Quran and hadith not merely literally, but by considering the historical, social, and cultural context. This approach helps students avoid a radical, textualist understanding that often becomes a gateway to extremism (Rahman, 1982).

### **Upholding the Values of Tolerance (Tasamuh) and Respect for Diversity**

Another important characteristic of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is its emphasis on the value of tolerance (tasamuh). Tolerance is understood as an attitude of respect for differences in religious views, beliefs, and practices without sacrificing the principles of Islamic faith. This learning instills an awareness that differences are inevitable and part of the sunnatullah (the sunnatullah). In moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, students are introduced to the diversity of schools of thought, schools of thought, and religious practices within Islam. Islamic Religious Education teachers do not present one view as the only absolute truth, but rather explain the background of these differences scientifically and proportionally (Azra, 2021). This approach trains students to be open, humble, and respectful of differences. Furthermore, tolerance is also instilled in the context of interfaith relations. Students are encouraged to understand the principle of peaceful coexistence with followers of other religions, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his social life. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning rejects all forms of hate speech, discrimination, and violence in the name of religion.

### **Dialogic, Participatory, and Democratic**

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is characterized by dialogic and participatory elements, placing students as active subjects in the learning process. This characteristic aligns with constructivist theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is built through interaction and reflection, not simply transferred one-way. In dialogic learning, Islamic Religious Education teachers create a space for discussion, questions and answers, and healthy scientific debate. Students are encouraged to express their opinions, ask critical questions, and rationally examine various religious views. The teacher acts as a facilitator, maintaining the dialogue in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The democratic character of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is also reflected in fair and inclusive classroom management. Every student has an equal opportunity to participate without discrimination. Thus, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning not only teaches democratic values theoretically but also practices them in the learning process (Nata, 2017).

### **Contextual, Actual, and Responsive to Social Dynamics**

The next characteristic is its contextual nature and responsiveness to social realities. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning links teaching materials to current issues such as intolerance, radicalism, social conflict, and the challenges of globalization and digitalization (Hasan, 2020). Students are encouraged to understand that Islamic teachings are strongly relevant in addressing contemporary issues. A contextual approach helps students develop critical and reflective thinking skills. They not only memorize Islamic teachings but also analyze their application in real life. Thus, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is applicable and transformative.

### **Emphasizing Internalization of Values and Formation of Moderate Character**

One of the most essential characteristics of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is its emphasis on internalizing values and developing students' moderate character. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning does not stop at mastering concepts and memorizing texts, but is directed at the process of instilling values (value internalization) so that students are able to use Islamic teachings as guidelines for attitudes and behavior in everyday life. Thus, the success of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is measured by the transformation of students' personalities, not solely academic achievement. Internalization of moderate values is carried out through a continuous, reflective, and contextual learning process. Values such as justice ('adl), balance (tawazun), tolerance (tasamuh), deliberation (shura), and social empathy are introduced, understood, and cultivated through various learning activities (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role as role models (uswah hasanah) who display a moderate attitude in speech, thinking, and decision-making.

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning also integrates character education into every subject. For example, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) learning not only discusses the legal aspects of worship but also the values of discipline, honesty, and responsibility. In learning about faith and morals, students are encouraged to reflect on the implications of faith for social attitudes, such as caring for others and rejecting injustice. This approach ensures that the value of moderation is not abstract, but concrete and applicable.

Assessment in moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is authentic and holistic. Evaluation is conducted not only through written tests but also through attitude observations, reflective journals, portfolios, and social project assessments. Thus, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is truly oriented toward the formation of inclusive and civilized religious character.

#### **Affirming the Principles of Justice, Anti-Violence, and Islam as Rahmatan lil 'Alamin**

The next most prominent characteristic of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is the affirmation of the principle of justice ('adl), the rejection of violence, and the strengthening of the paradigm of Islam as a blessing for all the worlds. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning instills the understanding that Islam exists to bring peace, prosperity, and justice to all humanity, regardless of religious, ethnic, or cultural background. In an educational context, the principle of justice is realized through the delivery of Islamic teachings that reject discrimination and oppression. Students are encouraged to understand that acts of violence in the name of religion contradict fundamental Islamic values and lack strong theological legitimacy. This understanding is crucial for countering extremist narratives that often utilize religious texts in a partial and ahistorical manner (Hasan, 2020).

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning also places sensitive concepts such as jihad, enjoining good and forbidding evil, and religious loyalty within a comprehensive and contextual perspective. Students are guided to understand that jihad does not merely mean physical warfare, but encompasses earnest efforts to uphold goodness, justice, and humanity. This approach prevents distortions of Islamic teachings that could potentially give rise to radical attitudes. Furthermore, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning instills an awareness that conflict resolution must be pursued through peaceful, dialogical, and dignified means. Students are trained to prioritize deliberation, empathy, and non-violent conflict resolution. Thus, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning serves as an ideological and moral bulwark in preventing the development of a culture of violence in educational environments (Shihab, 2020).

#### **Integrating Islamic, National, and Universal Humanitarian Values**

The final, equally important characteristic is the integration of Islamic values with national and universal humanitarian values. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning emphasizes that Islamic identity does not conflict with national identity. Rather, moderate Islamic teachings strengthen commitment to unity, social justice, and patriotism. In the context of Indonesia's multicultural landscape, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning plays a strategic role in instilling an inclusive national consciousness. Students are encouraged to understand that Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) align with Islamic values that uphold brotherhood (ukhuwah), justice, and the public interest (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020). This approach is crucial for countering transnational ideologies that seek to pit religion against the state. The integration of universal humanitarian values is also a key characteristic of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Students are encouraged to understand that Islam respects human rights, upholds the dignity of every individual, and encourages concern for vulnerable groups. These values are internalized through contextual learning, social activities, and community service projects.

By integrating Islamic, national, and universal humanitarian values, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning contributes to shaping students as devout Muslims, responsible citizens, and empathetic individuals. These characteristics make PAI learning relevant to global challenges while being firmly rooted in the Indonesian context.

### **Principles of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning based on**

The principles of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning are normative and pedagogical guidelines that direct the entire learning process to align with wasathiyah values. These principles serve as an operational foundation in designing objectives, selecting materials, determining methods, and evaluating PAI learning outcomes to prevent extreme, exclusive, and intolerant religious understandings (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). By adhering to the principles of moderation, PAI learning is expected to shape students who are religious, tolerant, just, and civilized. The principles of moderation-based PAI learning are not only normative-theological, but also pedagogical and contextual. This means that these principles must be translated into concrete learning practices in the classroom and educational environment. The following is a systematic and in-depth explanation of the main principles of moderation-based PAI learning.

#### **The Principle of Balance (Tawazun)**

The principle of balance (tawazun) is a fundamental principle in moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This principle emphasizes balance between various dimensions of education, such as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects; between faith, worship, and morals; and between individual and social interests. Islamic Religious Education learning should not only be oriented towards mastering the subject matter but also on shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. In the context of learning, the principle of balance prevents students from unequal religious understanding, whether it is overly textual and rigid or overly liberal and relativistic. Students are guided to understand Islamic teachings holistically and proportionally by integrating revelation and reason, normativity and contextuality. Thus, the principle of tawazun is an important foundation in developing a moderate understanding of Islam (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

#### **Principle of Justice ( ' Adl)**

The principle of justice ( 'adl ) occupies a central position in moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This principle demands that the entire learning process be conducted fairly, non-discriminatory, and respect the rights of each student. In learning practice, justice is realized through equal treatment of students without distinction of social background, culture, gender, or academic ability level. Furthermore, the principle of justice is also reflected in the delivery of teaching materials. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are required to present Islamic teachings objectively and proportionally, without instilling hatred or prejudice against other groups. Students are encouraged to understand that Islam upholds social justice and rejects all forms of oppression and violence. This principle strengthens the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning as a means of developing moral and social awareness (Madjid, 2019).

#### **Principle of Tolerance (Tasamuh)**

The principle of tolerance (tasamuh) is at the heart of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This principle teaches mutual respect for differences in religious views, beliefs, and practices, both within the Muslim community and in interfaith relations. Tolerance is not interpreted as religious relativism, but rather as a mature attitude in addressing differences. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, the principle of tolerance is realized through an objective and educational introduction to the diversity of Islamic schools of thought, schools of thought, and traditions. Students are guided to understand that differences are part of the intellectual dynamics of Islam and should not be used as a reason to blame or mislead one another (Azra, 2021). This principle of tasamuh contributes significantly to fostering an inclusive attitude and preventing narrow-minded fanaticism.

#### **Principles of Dialogue and Deliberation (Shura)**

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is based on the principles of dialogue and deliberation (shura). This principle emphasizes that the learning process must be communicative, participatory, and democratic. Teachers and students engage in open dialogue based on mutual respect, preventing indoctrination and authoritarianism. Through this dialogical principle, students are encouraged to express opinions, ask questions, and critically discuss religious material. The PAI teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding discussions to stay within moderate Islamic values. This approach trains students to think critically, empathize, and be responsible ( Tilaar, 2016).

### **Principles of Contextuality and Social Relevance**

The principle of contextuality demands that moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning be relevant to social realities and the challenges of the times. Teaching materials are not presented ahistorically and abstractly, but are linked to real-life phenomena faced by students. Issues such as intolerance, radicalism, digital media, and multiculturalism are used as reflection materials in learning. With this principle, students are encouraged to understand that Islamic teachings are dynamic and applicable in various life contexts. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning serves as a means to develop critical awareness and problem-solving skills based on Islamic values, which are rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for the universe) (Rahman, 1982).

### **The Principle of Exemplary Behavior (Uswah Hasanah)**

The principle of exemplary behavior (uswah hasanah) is a pedagogical principle that is crucial to the success of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Islamic Religious Education teachers serve not only as transmitters of material but also as role models in their attitudes, speech, and social interactions. A teacher's moderate attitude serves as a concrete example for students in practicing Islamic values in a balanced and tolerant manner. Exemplary behavior also includes consistency between a teacher's words and actions. The values of moderation taught must be reflected in everyday behavior within the school environment. Thus, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is not only theoretical but also practical and transformative (Attas, 1999).

### **Principles of Internalization of Values and Character Formation**

The final principle is the internalization of values and character formation. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is oriented towards developing students' personalities with faith, noble character, and social awareness. The learning process is designed to gradually instill the values of moderation through habituation, reflection, and real-life learning experiences. Learning evaluations assess not only cognitive aspects but also student attitudes and behaviors. Based on this principle, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning directly contributes to shaping a generation of moderate, tolerant, and responsible Muslims in social life (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020).

### **The Relevance of Moderation-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning**

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has very strong and strategic relevance in the context of Indonesia as a multicultural, multireligious, and multiethnic nation. Indonesia is not only the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, but also a nation built on the reality of religious, cultural, linguistic, and traditional diversity. This objective condition demands a religious learning model that is not exclusive and confrontational, but rather inclusive, tolerant, and peace-oriented. In this context, moderation-based PAI learning is a crucial instrument for instilling a balanced and contextual understanding of Islam. This learning is relevant to addressing contemporary socio-religious challenges such as increasing intolerance, identity polarization, and the infiltration of radical ideologies in educational environments (Azra, 2021). Therefore, the relevance of moderation-based PAI learning is not only pedagogical, but also ideological and sociological.

#### ***Relevance to the Reality of Indonesia's Social and Religious Diversity***

Indonesia is a country with a highly diverse population. The existence of six official religions, hundreds of religious beliefs, and diverse local cultures make Indonesia a pluralistic society prone to conflict if differences are not managed wisely. In this context, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is relevant as an educational tool to instill mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning helps students understand that plurality is a natural law (sunnatullah) that must be addressed with the principles of ta'aruf (conciliation) and tasamuh (balanced understanding). Students are encouraged to understand Quranic verses that affirm diversity as God's will, not a threat to faith. With this approach, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning plays an active role in building multicultural awareness based on Islamic values (Shihab, 2018).

#### ***Relevance in Maintaining National Unity and Integrity***

The relevance of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is also evident in its contribution to strengthening national unity and integrity. Indonesia has a long history of identity-based conflicts often fueled by religious sentiment. Religious education that is insensitive to the national context has the potential to widen the divide.

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning emphasizes that Islamic values align with national values such as Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Students are encouraged to understand that religious commitment does not conflict with national loyalty, but rather reinforces each other (Nata, 2018). Thus, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning serves as a means of internalizing inclusive religious nationalism.

#### ***Relevance as an Effort to Prevent Radicalism and Extremism***

In recent decades, religious radicalism and extremism have become serious challenges in Indonesia, including in the educational environment. Several studies have shown that schools and universities are not completely immune from the infiltration of intolerant and exclusive religious ideologies. This situation emphasizes the urgency of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning as a preventative measure. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning equips students with a comprehensive, critical, and contextual understanding of Islam. Students are encouraged to fully and proportionally understand religious concepts often misused by radical groups, such as jihad and amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil) (Al-Qaradawi, 2010). Thus, this learning serves as an ideological bulwark that prevents the emergence of extremist attitudes and violence in the name of religion.

#### ***Relevance to National Education Policy***

The relevance of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is further strengthened when linked to the direction of national education policy. The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, has placed religious moderation and character building on the national strategic agenda. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning aligns with the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) policy and the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasize the values of religiosity, tolerance, mutual cooperation, and global diversity (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). Therefore, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning does not stand alone but is integrated with the grand vision of national education to shape a generation with faith, noble character, and national insight.

#### ***Relevance in Addressing Global Challenges and the Digital Era***

The era of globalization and digitalization has had a significant impact on how students understand and practice religion. Religious information circulating on social media is not always valid and often contains provocative and extreme narratives. In this context, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning becomes highly relevant as a space for clarification and religious literacy. Students are guided to be critical of religious information sources, understand the difference between scientific authority and personal opinion, and develop media ethics consistent with moderate Islamic values (Baidhawiy, 2015). Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning helps students face global challenges without losing their Islamic and Indonesian identities.

#### ***Relevance in Forming a Generation of Indonesian Muslims with Moderate Character***

The final, and most fundamental, relevance is the role of moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in shaping a generation of Indonesian Muslims with moderate character. This generation is expected to be able to combine individual piety with social piety, and to be committed to universal humanitarian values. Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning contributes to shaping students who are not only religiously devout but also possess social empathy, a just attitude, and the ability to live side by side in diversity. In the long term, this learning will become a crucial foundation for creating a peaceful, harmonious, and civilized Indonesian society (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020).

## **5. Conclusion**

Moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is a strategic approach to addressing the challenges of religious diversity in the modern era. Religious moderation is a crucial foundation for developing balanced, just, and tolerant religious attitudes in students. The study results indicate that moderation-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can be implemented through strengthening the concept of wasathiyah (moderation), implementing dialogic learning strategies, and exemplary educators. This

learning positively impacts the development of students' religious character and social attitudes. Therefore, moderation-based Islamic Religious Education learning needs to be continuously developed with the support of educational policies and increased competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers to be able to produce a moderate and noble generation.

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