The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Instilling Religious Moderation Values of High School Students

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Abstract: The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Instilling Religious Moderation Values of High School Students

Objective: This study aims to determine the role and strategies of Islamic Education Teachers in instilling Religious Moderation in Students at SMA IT IQRA' Bengkulu City. **Method:** this type of research uses qualitative-descriptive with case study design. This research was conducted in 2024; the main subjects were Islamic Education Teachers and the Head of the school curriculum. Data collection used interview, observation, and documentation instruments. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the research data. **Results:** The role of Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMA IT Iqra' Bengkulu City is strategic in instilling religious moderation values in students. The values of religious moderation are integrated into the subject matter, such as explaining the concept of wasathiyah (balance), tolerance, and unity in Islamic teachings. **Conclusion:** Islamic Education teachers become role models for students by showing religious moderation in daily interactions in the school environment and relationships with the surrounding community. **Contribution:** This research contributes to the scientific literature, especially in Islamic education and the study of religious moderation.

Keyword: Islamic Education Teacher; Religious Moderation Values; Students

Abstrak: Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama Siswa SMA

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui Peran dan strategi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam menanamkan Moderasi Beragama pada Siswa di SMA IT IQRA' Kota Bengkulu. **Metode:** jenis penelitian menggunakan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan desain studi kasus. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan pada tahun 2024, subjek utama yaitu Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Kepala kurikulum sekolah. Pengumpulan data menggunakan instrumen wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis deskriptif digunakan dalam analisis data penelitian. **Hasil:** Peran guru Pendidikan Agama Islam di SMA IT Iqra' Kota Bengkulu sangat strategis dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama kepada siswa. Nilai-nilai moderasi beragama diintegrasikan dalam materi pelajaran, seperti penjelasan tentang konsep wasathiyah (keseimbangan), toleransi, dan persatuan dalam ajaran Islam. **Kesimpulan:** Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam menjadi teladan bagi para siswa dengan menunjukkan moderasi beragama dalam interaksi sehari-hari di lingkungan sekolah dan dalam hubungan dengan masyarakat sekitar. **Kontribusi:** Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada literatur keilmuan, khususnya dalam bidang pendidikan agama Islam dan studi tentang moderasi beragama.

Kata Kunci: Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam; Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama; Siswa

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A. INTRODUCTION

As the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, Indonesia's heterogeneity makes Islamic moderation crucial (Linando, 2023). The founding fathers established Pancasila as the absolute ideology that united all religious, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups. Indonesia is not a religious country, but it does not separate religion from the daily lives of its people. This is the identity of Indonesia, a country whose people are polite, tolerant, and able to dialogue with diversity. Religious values are interwoven with local wisdom and cultural rituals to foster harmony and peace (Hayes et al., 2024). If extremism and radicalism are allowed to grow and flourish, they will damage the entire nation. Therefore, religious moderation must be used as a paradigm (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015).

One must understand religious moderation contextually rather than textually. In Indonesia, religious moderation does not imply a moderate nation but a balanced religious understanding; religious understanding should be moderate because Indonesia has many cultures and customs. Moderate Muslims must respond firmly and take peaceful action against radical groups, extremists, and puritans who use violence (Beller & Kröger, 2018). This Islamic moderation can solve religious problems worldwide (Faizal et al., 2022).

Moderation should be defined as a shared commitment to achieving perfect balance (Raza-Ullah, 2020). This means that every member of the Community, no matter their tribe, ethnicity, culture, religion, or political choice, should be willing to listen to each other and learn how to manage and over-come differences, a legacy of our ancestors that teaches us to understand each other and feel how different we are from each other. Therefore, it is very clear that religious moderation is closely related to maintaining togetherness by having a tolerant attitude (Verkuyten et al., 2023). The national pro-gram strengthens religious moderation in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Develop-ment Plan (RPJMN) (Apriani & Aryani, 2022).

The government develops and cultivates this religion to maintain the integrity of the nation and state and create a harmonious life among people of different faiths or beliefs. The Directorate General of Islamic Education has implemented several specific programs. These programs are focused not only on madrasahs but also on Islamic higher education, diniyah, and pesantren education. They have also been applied to general education institutions at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, especially in creating materials and curricula on Islamic education (Jackson, 2018).

Education is one of the many ways religious moderation spreads. Education is a crucial component in advocating the moderate principles adopted by the Indonesian government. Education is where a student's personality and maturation process are formed (Mudawinun, 2018). According to Market 3 of Law No. 20 of 2003, national education aims to develop a nation's abilities, characters, and civilization that produces the nation's life. The goal is for students to become devoted to Allah Swt, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, and independent. They should also become democratic and responsible citizens (Power & Scott, 2014).

The role of teachers is important in the education process to achieve the success of a program that focuses on strengthening religious moderation. Strengthening religious moderation might help students (Alam et al., 2024). Educating students in secondary schools on how to accept differences, foster passion and commitment in friendship, and fight radicalism is very beneficial for maintaining religious harmony and balance (Khotimah, 2024). Therefore, it is expected that Islamic education teachers can apply the values of religious moderation to address educational issues and serve as part of learning. Some schools in Bengkulu try to implement the process of religious moderation, as is the case when some non-Muslim students attend Islamic religious lessons despite their different beliefs.

All students at SMA IT Iqra' Kota Bengkulu are Muslim. SMA IT Iqra uses Islamic values as the basis for learning and characterizing its students daily. The curriculum implemented

not only focuses on academic achievement but also on spiritual development. Every student is trained to apply religious teachings in their lives. This school environment, which has students who share the same beliefs, helps to create a good atmosphere in which Islamic values are instilled thoroughly and builds student solidarity. Overall, Iqra IT High School students are Muslim, but its environment is heterogeneous, with a church not far from Iqra IT High School. So, the problem is the role of Islamic education teachers in implementing religious moderation values in Iqra' IT High School students in Kota Bengkulu.

Research on the role of Islamic Education teachers in instilling religious moderation values has been widely conducted, particularly in the context of multicultural education and student character development. Several previous studies have highlighted teachers' strategies in teaching tolerance, inclusivity, and balanced religious understanding to prevent extremism (Ghosn-Chelala, 2020); Adebayo, 2021; Poynting & Mason, 2008; Riaz et al., 2023). Moreover, various studies have shown that a pedagogical approach based on dialogue and teachers' real-life examples significantly influences students' moderate attitudes.

However, there is still a research gap regarding the effectiveness of Islamic Education teachers' specific methods in instilling religious moderation values at the high school level. Most studies have focused on higher education or general education contexts, while research on implementing religious moderation values in high schools remains limited. Additionally, there is a lack of studies examining how school environments, curricula, and community involvement contribute to strengthening the role of teachers in fostering religious moderation.

Most previous studies focused more on the curriculum aspects and conventional Islamic education teaching methods without highlighting how Islamic education can be integrated with 21st-century skills to form more competitive graduates. In addition, studies on the relationship between the effectiveness of Islamic education teaching and graduates' readiness to face the academic and professional world are still limited, especially in the context of Madrasah Aliyah.

This research proposes problem-solving and project-based learning models based on Islamic values, which have not been systematically applied in Madrasah Aliyah. It also highlights the importance of synergy between madrasahs, parents, and communities in supporting more holistic learning. Thus, this research significantly contributes to the development of Islamic education learning strategies that are more adaptive, relevant, and able to produce graduates who excel academically and characteristically in the modern era.

B. METHOD

This research was conducted in 2024 using qualitative methods. Research with a qualitative approach is often referred to as a naturalistic method because it is conducted in natural conditions (natural settings. Case studies explore 'bounded systems' or specific cases over time through in-depth data collection, drawing on rich sources of contextual information, such as programs, events, activities, or individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The data used in this study came from two types of data sources, including (1) Primary data collected directly by researchers from the first source or place of research, in this case, SMA IT Iqra' Bengkulu. Researchers use the information provided by respondents, namely teachers and principals; (2) secondary data, which is data sources that provide data to other people or documents indirectly, are called secondary data. Data can be found in a short time.

Qualitative research in this study employed data collection techniques, including interviews, observations, and documentation. In this research, the descriptive analysis method will be used. Descriptive analysis is a research method that examines the current status of a group of people, objects, conditions, systems of thought, or classes of events to make a systematic, factual, and accurate decryption, description, or painting of the facts, properties, and relationships between different phenomena (Zellatifanny & Mudjiyanto, 2018).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Religious moderation has the meaning of plurality and is necessary for various conditions of the pluralistic Indonesian nation by providing comprehensive religious teaching that can represent everyone who exists through flexible teachings by not leaving the text (Qur'an and Hadith), as well as the importance of using reason to solve all problems (Platteau, 2011).

Religious moderation does not entail blending truths or erasing individual identities. While we still have clear convictions about the truth and law of an issue, moderation does not curse the truth. Regarding religion, moderation emphasizes recognizing that others, regardless of nationality or faith, share equal rights as members of a sovereign society. People have different beliefs from their religion or faith, which we must respect and accept. Therefore, we must continue to act and practice religion moderately (Kossowska & Sekerdej, 2015).

Religious moderation is crucial for creating tolerance and harmony worldwide, local, national, or international. To maintain balance and sustain civilization and peace, people should choose moderation by rejecting religious extremism and liberalism. In this way, all religions can treat each other respectfully, accept differences, and live together in peace and harmony. Religious moderation can be a necessity in a multicultural society like Indonesia (Agung et al., 2024).

Religious moderation fosters justice in a pluralistic society. Everyone will enjoy beautiful differences when they have equal portions, access, and opportunities to worship (Thompson, 2020). This means everyone has access to the same place of worship and has the same opportunity to perform religious activities such as worshipping their God. As a result, the message conveyed by the Minister of Religious Affairs shows the crucial importance of justice as a tool to integrate religious pluralism and maintain the harmony of religious life in Indonesia (Faisal et al., 2022).

Because Indonesia is a pluralistic nation, it needs to be managed as well as possible so that conflict does not develop and engulf our country. Thus, every Indonesian citizen must maintain and care for pluralism with all their heart and soul (Raya et al., 2023). By understanding and practicing religious moderation, Indonesians can coexist peacefully, respect differences, and work together to achieve common goals. This makes Indonesia a pluralistic country that is strong and united in diversity (Halik & Verweij, 2018).

The unique features of Islamic moderation in Indonesia are not found in other religions or countries. The basis of Islamic moderation in Indonesia integrates spiritual and physical aspects, the power of revelation and human reason, and divine and kauniyah verses. In moderate Islam, everyone is honored regardless of ethnicity, nation, language, position, social status, and religion, and the superiority of each person is determined by their devotion (Meftah, 2018).

The fact that people from different cultures live in Indonesia holds tremendous potential and threatens the nation's integration process. This needs to be addressed because, in addition to being an opportunity for children to learn about multiculturalism, it is also a challenge for teachers to instill multiculturalism from an early age (Pabbajah, 2021). Where multiculturalism is considered an understanding or situation-condition of a society that depends on many cultures, multiculturalism is often a feeling shaped by knowledge, built by skills that help in effective communication. Each person from their cultural perspective is found in every situation involving groups of people with different cultural backgrounds, and a sense of security is an atmosphere where there is no anxiety, no self-defense mechanisms, and nothing (Morris et al., 2014).

In religious moderation, the existing principles are used to realize a moderate society. Some of the principles of religious moderation related to the concept of wasathiyah Islam are as follows:

1) Wasathiyyah (Middle Way)

The principle of Wasathiyyah can be defined as an understanding that combines the context of society and the text of religious teachings by not overdoing religion or reducing religious teachings. So, "wasatiyah" is a view or behavior that always tries to take the middle position of two different and excessive behaviors so that one does not dominate an individual's mind or behavior. According to Khaled Abou el Fadl in The Great Theft, "moderation" is an understanding that follows the middle line, neither extreme right nor left (Harto & Kasinyo, 2021).

2) Tawazun (Balanced)

Tawazun is a balanced perspective that does not go out of the established line. The word tawazun comes from the word mizanyang, which means balance. However, in mizan moderation, it is not meant as a tool or object for weighing but justice in all aspects of life, both in this world and in the hereafter. Islam is a balanced religion, which teaches to balance between spirit and intellect, reason and heart, conscience and passion, and gives separate parts to revelation and reason (Kriger & Seng, 2005).

3) I'tidal (Straight and Firm)

I'tidal is a perspective that puts things in their place, dividing things according to their portions, exercising rights, and fulfilling obligations. As Muslims, we are required to be fair to everyone in any matter and always do good to everyone. Justice is a noble value of religion, so justice can't occur if community welfare does not exist (Sovacool et al., 2017).

4) Tasamuh (Tolerance)

In Arabic, the word "Masamune" comes from the word "Samhain," which means "ease." According to the Indonesian Dictionary, tolerance means respecting, allowing, and allowing something different or contrary to one's beliefs. Therefore, it can be concluded that tolerance is a behavior that respects the stance of others, not necessarily correcting or justifying what they say (Gökarıksel & Secor, 2015).

5) Musawah (Persamaan)

Musawah means equality of status; Islam never differentiates between individuals. Everyone is equal regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, tradition, culture, or rank. Since the creator has determined everything, humans cannot change what has been determined (Ayanaw & Alewond, 2024).

6) Shura' (deliberation)

Shura' comes from the word Syawara-Yusyawiru, which means to give an explanation, state, or take something; another form of this word is tasyawara, which means deliberation, exchanging opinions, or exchanging ideas. Thus, deliberation is a way to reduce prejudice and discord among individuals and groups in the context of moderation. This is because deliberation allows communication, openness, and freedom of opinion through various means of friendship, which results in strong brotherly relations and unity in ukhuwah Islamiyah, ukhuwah watoniyah, ukhuwah basariyah, and ukhuwah insaniyah.

Discussion

1) Strategies of Islamic Education Teachers in Instilling the Values of Religious Moderation in School

Making students recognize themselves, their potential, their environment, and the surrounding society is the goal of educating. For learners to become reconciled individuals in the environment and nature, teachers must be able to enlighten them about religious moderation. With this knowledge, it is expected to create harmony in living together and the ability to coexist (live with others) with people of different religions, beliefs, races, and other charac-

teristics. Of course, the role of the teacher is crucial. In this case, teachers must have teaching principles to treat students well to achieve educational goals.

One of the principles of teaching is as follows (Karim & Munir, 2017) consis of (1) Teachers must have the ability to arouse students' interest in the lessons taught and have the ability to use innovative learning resources and media; (2) Teachers should be able to encourage students to actively think critically and find out for themselves; (3) Teachers can provide material in an order (sequence) appropriate to the age and stage of student development; (4) Teachers can relate lessons to students' knowledge so that students easily understand them; (5) The teacher can explain topics repeatedly so that students understand them better; (6) Teachers should consider how subjects and daily practices relate to each other; (7) Teachers should provide opportunities for students to observe, research, and infer about their learning to maintain concentration; (8) Teachers should teach students to build social relationships, both indoors and outdoors; (9)Teachers must see and study individual student differences to help students according to their differences (Kirom, 2017).

As teachers, it is not only their responsibility to teach knowledge to their students but also to have the ability to shape their characters into excellent and independent individuals (science for science). Islam not only teaches science to achieve great academic achievements but also teaches science to create peace and security (Saada, 2023).

A prosperous human civilization coexists with the concept of lifelong learning, namely learning to know (learning to know), learning to coexist (learning to coexist with other people of the same religion, nation, and homeland), and unity in diversity (united in differences in culture, faith, and religion (Samsul, 2020).

As perfect human beings, teachers must be able to assess every action, attitude, and statement recorded in the lives of their students, both in national and international contexts. Since they serve as examples for their students, teachers have a crucial role in developing religious equality. In peace architecture theory, several things are needed to manage religious differences. First, effective and harmonious communication channels must exist, which allow for discussion, clarification, and correction of rumors or information that may create tension between social groups. Second, there must be functioning problem-solving institutions, formal or informal (Waruwu, 2024).

Therefore, as educators, teachers should be able to explain how differences in race, language, and skin color affect religious moderation in schools. In this way, students can see how teachers do things themselves.

The results of interviews with Islamic education teachers at SMA IT IQRA' Kota Bengkulu show that Islamic education teachers have a crucial role in helping students understand and practice the values of religious moderation. Islamic education teachers also have the task of providing or conveying religious values to students.

According to interviews, several factors influence the success of Islamic education teachers at SMA IT IQRA' Kota Bengkulu in instilling religious moderation values in their students. One of these factors is students' different social and cultural backgrounds, which challenges Islamic education teachers. However, support and active participation from students' families can help. Knowledge, attitude, and skills are the three main components that must be considered. The knowledge aspect includes students' understanding of Islamic teachings, including history, fiqh, tafsir, and aqidah. The attitude aspect covers students' moral, ethical, and moral aspects daily. The skills aspect includes the application of Islamic teachings in daily life.

2) Supporting and Hinder Factors in Installing the Values of Religious Moderation in Schools

At SMA IT Kota Bengkulu, there are supporting and inhibiting factors for internalizing religious moderation values. These factors support the cultivation of religious moderation values from within and outside.

The supporting factors are as follows:

a) Teachers: Teachers teach subject matter and their students' morals in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, Islamic education teachers at SMA IT Kota Bengkulu always give good examples to their students inside and outside the classroom.

b) Environment: SMA IT Kota Bengkulu is a heterogeneous religious environment, so that research can be conducted.

c) One factor that supports the implementation of internalizing values in learning is the commitment of all teachers to show high tolerance. Islamic education teachers said this is an exemplary example of instilling the value of religious moderation in themselves and other teachers. The second factor is the neighborhood community; everyone gets along well and peacefully, and there are never any religious problems.

d) Inhibiting Factors:

The inhibiting factor in implementing the internalization of moderation values in Islamic education learning comes from the students themselves, for example, the background of extremist students. Their lack of strong knowledge of religion impacts how they view other religions, and they have never lived in a heterogeneous religious environment.

D. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Research implications

The results of this study can be the basis for compiling or improving the Islamic religious education curriculum oriented towards religious moderation values, as well as generating insights into effective methods used by teachers in instilling moderation values, such as critical discussions, simulations, and integration of moderation values in thematic learning. Implementing religious moderation education can strengthen the image of SMA IT IQRA' as an institution that contributes to forming a moderate and tolerant young generation.

2. Research Contribution

This research contributes to the scientific literature, especially in Islamic religious education and the study of religious moderation. It provides practical guidance for teachers in integrating the values of religious moderation into the learning process. This research has the potential to become an important reference for the development of Islamic education that is adaptive and relevant to the challenges of the times, especially in dealing with issues of diversity and religious moderation in Indonesia.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Further research could explore more specific and innovative teaching methods in instilling the value of religious moderation, such as using digital technology, gamification, or project-based approaches. Conduct similar research in schools with different characteristics, such as public schools, Madrasah, or Pesantren, to understand the role of teachers in a broader context, or conduct a comparative study between SMA IT IQRA' and other schools in different regions to see the differences in approaches and outcomes in instilling the value of religious moderation.

F. CONCLUSION

The role of Islamic education teachers is not only limited to academic teaching but also includes forming moderate, tolerant, and adaptive student characters in the face of diversity. This is important in creating a young generation that can live harmoniously in a plural society. In implementing the Moderate Learning Approach, Islamic education teachers use interactive, inclusive, and dialog-based learning methods to teach the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and coexistence in diversity. Moderation Values in the Curriculum are integrated

into the subject matter, such as explaining the concept of wasathiyah (balance), tolerance, and unity in Islamic teachings.

Islamic Education teachers become role models for students by showing religious moderation in daily interactions in the school environment and relations with the surrounding community. Islamic education teachers also guide students in religious activities that support strengthening moderation values, such as interfaith discussions, moderate preaching training, and inclusive commemoration of religious holidays. The role of Islamic education teachers is not only limited to academic teaching but also includes forming moderate, tolerant, and adaptive student characters in the face of diversity. This is important in creating a young generation that can live harmoniously in a plural society.

The novelty of this research lies in its systematic approach, which connects teaching methods, school culture, and community involvement in strengthening religious moderation. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on higher education or theoretical aspects, this study provides a new perspective on the practical implementation of religious moderation values in high schools. Additionally, it highlights the crucial role of teachers as agents of change who deliver instructional content and create a learning ecosystem conducive to developing students' moderate attitudes. Thus, this study significantly contributes to developing a religious moderation-based learning model at the high school level. The findings can serve as a foundation for designing more effective Islamic education policies to foster students' moderate character, both academically and socially.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript. MIK: Conceptualization, Writing - Original Draft, and Methodology. IAA: Conceptualization, Writing – Review & Editing.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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