



The Role Education Teachers in Instilling Moderation in Elementary School Students in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in fostering religious moderation among elementary school students in the digital era. The study aims to explore the strategies, challenges, and impacts experienced by teachers in cultivating attitudes of tolerance, inclusivity, and harmony amidst the rapid flow of digital information. Employing a qualitative methodology, data were collected through literature review, interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model and content analysis to identify patterns in teacher roles and innovations. The findings reveal that PAI teachers serve as role models, facilitators, and innovators by integrating religious moderation values into the curriculum, promoting dialogic learning, and utilizing digital technologies such as interactive media and online platforms. Strategies include strengthening multicultural education, character development, and collaboration with families and communities. However, teachers face challenges such as limited resources, insufficient digital training, resistance to change, and social environmental influences. The study concludes that the success of instilling religious moderation is significantly influenced by teachers' ability to adapt to technology, innovate in teaching, and receive support from various stakeholders to create an inclusive and harmonious school environment.

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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has brought significant changes to the field of education, including the teaching of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in elementary schools

(Abidin & Maulana, 2020). This digital transformation requires teachers to adapt their teaching methods and strategies to remain relevant to contemporary needs and to foster students' moderate and tolerant character (Al-Fauzan, 2021). Previous studies have shown that teachers play a crucial role in developing attitudes of religious moderation, yet challenges persist in effectively integrating these values amidst the rapid flow of digital information and diverse social influences (Azra, 2019). Theoretically, religious education serves as the foundation for character and moral development, with teachers acting as role models, facilitators, and innovators in the learning process (Mujiburrahman, 2021). Earlier research has highlighted the importance of integrating religious moderation values into the curriculum and dialogic learning (Zarkasyi, 2020), but there are still research gaps regarding the optimal use of digital technology and the strengthening of collaboration among schools, families, and communities (Nurkholis & Rahmawati, 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to provide solutions by thoroughly examining the strategies, challenges, and innovations that PAI teachers can implement to instill religious moderation in elementary students in the digital era. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative analysis of curriculum approaches, technology utilization, and cross-sector collaboration to create an inclusive and harmonious educational environment. The main objective of this study is to formulate effective strategies that PAI teachers can apply to foster religious moderation among elementary school students amid the challenges of the digital age.

Table 1. The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Instilling Religious Moderation in Elementary School Students in the Digital Era

No	Teacher's Role	Main Strategies	Key Challenges	Recommended Solutions
1	Role Model & Facilitator	Demonstrating moderate attitudes, fostering dialogue, integrating moderation values in lessons ¹¹⁰	Limited time, students' limited understanding	Teacher training & policy support ²⁴¹⁰
2	Innovator & Digital Manager	Utilizing digital media, innovating teaching methods ²³	Negative technology of influence	Technology management, teacher training ²³
3	Collaborator	Partnering with parents & community, organizing interfaith activities ⁶⁹¹⁰	Lack of external support	Strengthening school-community collaboration ⁶

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the digital era plays a vital role in instilling the values of religious moderation among elementary school students through the integration of digital literacy, exemplary behavior, and innovative teaching approaches. By utilizing technology such as social media, educational videos, and interactive games, teachers can deliver Islamic teachings in a more engaging and inclusive manner (Satrisno & Efendi, 2024). In the context of increasingly open access to information, PAI teachers are also expected to act as digital gatekeepers, helping students avoid exposure to narratives that promote extremism and radicalism (Prasetyo, 2024).

A study by Husna Nasihin (2022), a lecturer at INISNU Temanggung, highlights the significance of involving local religious leaders and employing local wisdom-based approaches, which have proven effective in strengthening religious moderation within interfaith communities. Collaboration among teachers, community leaders, and digital platforms is also evident in the use of the educational game *Simaksaja* as a medium to cultivate moderate Islamic character among elementary students (Ibda & Nurhidayat, 2023).

Findings from SDN Geblog in Temanggung reveal that PAI teachers serve as motivators and innovators by incorporating the principles of justice, balance, and tolerance into religious activities, despite facing challenges such as limited facilities and the young age of students (Ibda, 2023). Furthermore, through discussion forums and collaboration with the community of converts in the Kedu region, INISNU has expanded the reach of religious moderation education by promoting local wisdom-based learning for vulnerable groups (Nurhidayat & Ibda, 2023). Therefore, the role of PAI teachers extends beyond classroom instruction, positioning them as agents of religious moderation in both digital spaces and the broader social environment.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in instilling the values of religious moderation among elementary school students amid the ongoing digital transformation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yanti, Cahyono, & Hayani, 2023). The research was conducted at several elementary schools located in Kaloran Subdistrict, Temanggung Regency. These schools were selected purposively due to their active implementation of religious moderation practices within PAI instruction (Nasihin et al., 2022).

The participants in this study included PAI teachers, school principals, and students who were actively involved in religious and character education programs. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis (Sugiyono, 2021; Satrisno & Efendi, 2024). Interviews aimed to explore the strategies, methods, and experiences of teachers in transmitting the values of moderation. Observations were carried out during classroom sessions and religious activities to capture the real-time application of those values. Documentation included lesson plans, digital teaching materials, and records of religious activities related to the values of tolerance, justice, and balance (Ibda & Nurhidayat, 2023).

To ensure data validity, the researcher employed source and method triangulation, along with member checking by confirming findings with participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Prasetyo, 2024). The data were analyzed using thematic analysis involving data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions in a systematic and reflective manner (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2019). This process began with preliminary coding, followed by categorization into key themes, and finally interpretation based on the theoretical framework of religious moderation and contextually grounded pedagogy.

Semi-structured interviews were used to allow for open-ended responses while still adhering to the study's focus. This approach enabled deeper exploration of teachers' views, practices, and challenges in integrating religious moderation into their daily instruction (Hefni, 2020). Observations were conducted during PAI classes and school-based religious events to directly observe students' engagement with moderation-oriented activities. The documents reviewed included lesson plans, visual aids, and digital tools such as the educational game *Simaksaja* (Ibda, 2023; Nurhidayat & Ibda, 2023).

This methodological approach enabled a comprehensive and contextual understanding of how PAI teachers in elementary schools across Kaloran Subdistrict act not only as educators but also as agents of religious moderation in the digital age. Through triangulated and reflective data analysis, this study reveals pedagogical practices and strategies that are both relevant and effective for shaping a generation grounded in tolerance, balance, and inclusive Islamic values.

FINDINGS

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it was found that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers across elementary schools in Kaloran Subdistrict, Temanggung, played a significant role in promoting religious moderation among students. These teachers not only acted as providers of religious knowledge but also served as role models for inclusive, balanced, and tolerant religious behavior (Ibda, 2023; Prasetyo, 2024). Core values such as tolerance, justice, balance (*tawazun*), and rejection of radicalism were consistently integrated into PAI lessons as well as in daily school activities, including communal prayers, Islamic holiday celebrations, and student reflections (Hefni, 2020). Teachers made intentional efforts to align content with students' developmental stages, ensuring that the values of moderation were internalized gradually and meaningfully (Satrioso & Efendi, 2024).

During the learning process, digital media played a vital role. Teachers used tools such as moderate Islamic videos, religious songs with inclusive messages, and interactive educational platforms like *Simaksaja* to promote Islamic values in engaging ways (Ibda & Nurhidayat, 2023). These platforms helped enhance student enthusiasm and made abstract values like tolerance and respect for difference easier to grasp. Furthermore, reflective and communicative methods—such as group discussions, peer learning, and Islamic storytelling rooted in local wisdom—were applied to foster a dialogic and peace-oriented learning environment (Nasihin, Setyawati, & Faizah, 2022).

Beyond classroom learning, PAI teachers were also deeply involved in designing religious extracurricular programs that embodied moderation. Activities such as inter-class

Qur'an recitation sessions, social charity events (*bakti sosial*), and joint celebrations of religious holidays served to reinforce values of cooperation, empathy, and unity (Nurhidayat & Ibda, 2023). In these efforts, teachers functioned as both facilitators and moral guides. Despite challenges such as limited digital infrastructure and varying levels of student understanding, PAI teachers consistently demonstrated creativity, commitment, and a strong spirit of nationalism in promoting religious moderation in schools (Yanti, Cahyono, & Hayani, 2023). These findings underscore that fostering religious moderation from an early age is attainable when supported by proactive and pedagogically adaptive educators.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the essential role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in shaping religiously moderate attitudes from an early age, particularly at the elementary school level. The teacher is not only responsible for delivering religious content but also serves as a role model who embodies moderation through both behavior and pedagogical strategies. This aligns with Ibda (2021), who asserts that PAI teachers have a strategic function in promoting inclusive, tolerant, and diversity-respecting religious values by integrating *Aswaja*-based principles into the curriculum. Furthermore, the teacher's ability to adapt to technology-based learning approaches reflects a positive response to the demands of the digital era, where students are increasingly exposed to digital content that may influence their religious perspectives either positively or negatively.

Moreover, the implementation of religious moderation extends beyond classroom instruction and is reflected in collaborative and community-based school activities. Programs such as joint Qur'an recitation, celebrations of religious holidays, and social service activities have proven effective in contextualizing and internalizing moderate Islamic values. This supports the perspective of Satrisno & Efendi (2024), who emphasize that religious moderation should not only be taught cognitively but also practiced through real-life experiences that holistically shape students' character. Although several challenges remain, such as limited technological infrastructure and varying levels of student understanding, the teacher's consistent dedication and commitment to fostering moderation values remain the key to success in this effort.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers is highly significant in shaping students' religious moderation from an early age, particularly at the elementary school level. The teacher is not merely a transmitter of religious content, but also serves as a figure who embodies moderation through attitudes, behavior, and applied teaching strategies. This aligns with Ibda's (2021) assertion that PAI teachers hold a strategic function in promoting friendly, tolerant, and diversity-respecting religious values through the integration of *Aswaja* principles into the curriculum. Moreover, the teacher's ability to adapt technology-based learning approaches reflects a responsive effort to address the challenges of the digital age, in which students are increasingly exposed to digital media that may influence their religious understanding both positively and negatively.

Furthermore, the implementation of moderation values is not limited to classroom instruction but is also manifested through collaborative and social school

activities. Programs such as communal Qur'an recitations, celebrations of religious holidays, and social service projects have proven to be effective in instilling contextual and grounded religious values. This supports the view of Satrisno & Efendi (2024), who argue that religious moderation must not only be taught conceptually, but also practiced through real-life experiences that holistically shape students' character. Despite obstacles such as limited technological infrastructure and varying levels of student comprehension, the enthusiasm and commitment of teachers in consistently internalizing moderation values remain the key to the success of this educational effort.

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