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The Role of Islamic Education in Combating Radicalism Through Religious Moderation

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Abstract

In Indonesia, Islamic education plays a very important role in efforts to combat radicalism while promoting religious moderation. The Ministry of Religious Affairs emphasizes that religious education should be an integral part of the school curriculum, highlighting the balance between intellectual and spiritual development. This emphasis has become increasingly relevant due to the emergence of horizontal conflicts often triggered by radicalism and intolerance resulting from narrow and non-moderate interpretations of religion. Teachers and Islamic education institutions bear significant responsibility in disseminating a correct understanding of key Islamic concepts such as tolerance, jihad, and tawhid. A proper understanding of these concepts can prevent students from adopting extremist interpretations and guide them toward the values of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin (a mercy to all creation). The findings indicate that inclusive character education is capable of shaping a younger generation that appreciates multicultural life and is accustomed to living in diversity with mutual respect. Madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) function as important Islamic educational institutions in instilling moderate values. Through comprehensive learning processes, these institutions not only provide religious knowledge but also foster students' morality and character, enabling them to become more open-minded and tolerant. However, to effectively address the challenges of radicalism, strong synergy among educational institutions, parents, communities, and the government is essential.

Keyword: Islamic Education; Religious Moderation; Radicalism; Inclusive Character Education; Religious Tolerance.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia still faces conflict amidst its ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity. Radicalism continues to be a major problem for the country (Akhmad, 2015). This has also triggered efforts to moderate religion. This situation has also prompted the government's Ministry of Religious Affairs to promote religious moderation. This is done to prevent extremism, radicalism, and religious conflict that are inevitable in a diverse environment. Therefore, the practice of religious moderation is necessary amidst the various complex problems in society (Taufiq et al., 2021). Religious radicalism is now a major concern worldwide, including Indonesia. This phenomenon often causes conflict and inequality that threaten stability and peace (Suparto, 2020). In situations like this, Islamic education plays a crucial role in combating radicalism and promoting religious moderation (Ningsih et al., 2024). In recent decades, radicalism has grown into a frightening threat haunting the world (Prasetyo et al., 2025). Violence in the name of religion, including Islam, has killed many people and caused significant damage (Alfani et al., 2023). In such situations, Islam is often misinterpreted and used to support violence. This creates a negative stigma against Islam and Muslims and hinders efforts for peace and interfaith tolerance (Ningsih et al., 2024).

Islamic education serves as a crucial defense in these complex circumstances. This institution, grounded in the Quran and Hadith, holds great potential to counter radicalism and foster religious moderation in society (Achlami, 2024). Quality and moderate Islamic education has great potential to introduce Islam, a mercy for all the worlds, such as compassion, tolerance, and respect for differences, thereby increasing a broad understanding of Islamic teachings and creating a more tolerant society (Awalita, 2024). Furthermore, Islamic education has the potential to become a strong bulwark against radicalism and terrorism by promoting universal humanist principles aligned with Islamic teachings and fostering interfaith communication to foster understanding and tolerance (Armedi et al., 2025).

It is important to remember that Islamic education is not the only way to combat radicalism. Creating an environment conducive to the growth of a moderate and tolerant understanding of Islam requires commitment from various parties, including the government, religious leaders, and the wider community.

METHOD

This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method based on literature review. All research data was obtained from various reliable sources, including books, scientific journals, and other relevant literature supporting the study's focus (Sugiono, 2018). The collected data then underwent an organizational process, starting from collection,

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categorization, and critical analysis, so that the final results could be presented systematically, concisely, and easily understood. The research findings confirm that efforts to counter radicalism can be pursued through strategies rooted in education. One primary approach is through moderate Islamic religious education, emphasizing the values of tolerance, compassion, and togetherness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Islamic Education

Islamic education plays a highly strategic role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also strong spiritually, morally, and socially. As an educational system, Islam emphasizes a balance between mastery of knowledge and the development of noble morals (Hayani et al., 2021). This makes Islamic education not merely a means of acquiring knowledge but also a path to instilling divine values that guide human life (Fantofik et al., 2026). The primary role of Islamic education is to instill faith and devotion to Allah SWT from an early age, so that students grow into individuals with character, integrity, and a full awareness of their responsibilities as servants of Allah and caliphs on earth (Mukhlis, 2024). Furthermore, Islamic education serves to foster a high level of social awareness through teachings of caring, mutual assistance, and upholding justice and brotherhood (Nurjannah et al., 2020).

Amidst the challenges of modernity and globalization, Islamic education also serves as a moral bulwark that protects the younger generation from negative influences, such as moral crisis, moral decline, and radical ideologies that deviate from the essence of Islamic teachings (Anisa et al., 2025). By integrating general knowledge and religion, Islamic education encourages the birth of individuals who are broad-minded, tolerant, and able to adapt to current developments without losing their Islamic identity (Falah et al., 2024). Thus, the role of Islamic education is crucial, not only in shaping devout and noble Muslims, but also in producing the nation's next generation who are ready to contribute positively to society, the nation, and world civilization (Kholil, 2015).

Religious Moderation

Religious moderation is a concept that emphasizes balance in understanding, practicing, and expressing religious teachings. The essence of religious moderation is avoiding excessive attitudes, both in the form of extreme fanaticism and indifference to religious values (Yusriyah et al., 2023). Moderation serves as a middle path that guides religious communities to live in harmony, respect each other, and maintain harmony within diversity. The role of religious

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moderation is crucial in the context of a pluralistic society like Indonesia. Through moderation, religious communities are encouraged to cultivate tolerance, respect differences, and uphold universal humanitarian values. Moderation also teaches the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation to create a peaceful and inclusive social life (Ulinnuha, 2021).

In practice, religious moderation does not mean diminishing the quality of faith or weakening religious teachings, but rather upholding the principles of justice, wisdom, and a deep understanding of religious texts (Dodego et al.). This is done by considering the social, cultural, and humanitarian context so that religious teachings truly bring benefits to life. Furthermore, religious moderation is a strategic effort to counter radicalism and intolerance, which can divide the nation. By instilling the values of moderation, whether through formal education, the family environment, or society, it is hoped that a generation will emerge with noble morals, broad perspectives, and the ability to maintain unity. Thus, religious moderation is a crucial key to realizing a peaceful, harmonious, and civilized national life (Kalinda, 2022).

The Role of Islamic Education in Combating Radicalism Through Religious Moderation

In this era of globalization, religion and technology are increasingly integrated. However, many individuals utilize technology in ways that are detrimental to technological developments that are supposed to make life easier (Iwani et al., 2024). Key issues include the delivery of religious messages through technology, the relevance of religion and technology, and the application of religious moderation amidst technological and information advancements (Ropiah et al., 2025). However, this does not mean that the threat of radicalism in Indonesia has completely disappeared. Radical groups employ various tactics to maintain their existence.

Religious moderation refers to an approach that emphasizes understanding, tolerance, and dialogue among adherents of various religions. This strategy aims to create harmony, mutual understanding, and cooperation between individuals and groups with different religious backgrounds. In 2019, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia declared the "Year of Religious Moderation." The term "moderation" comes from the Latin "moderatio," meaning "not excessive and not lacking." In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), moderation has two meanings: reducing violence and avoiding extremism. The principle of religious moderation (wasathiyah) is a view and attitude that prioritizes balance and justice. According to this concept, a religious person should not be extreme, but should always seek balanced solutions.

Implementing these values of religious moderation in Islamic religious education is one way to face the changing era of the 21st century. With advances in information technology,

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access to a variety of content has become increasingly easier for everyone, including students. In an effort to face the challenges of the 21st century, the values of religious moderation are implemented in Islamic Religious Education. These values align with the Pancasila Student Profile, which includes: upholding religious values, building independence, encouraging analytical and innovative thinking, prioritizing cooperation, and respecting global diversity (Saefuddin et al., 2023).

Islamic education is based on the comprehensive principles of Islamic teachings. These teachings affirm the spiritual connection between humans and Allah SWT. Therefore, Islamic education is expected to shape individuals who communicate well, cooperate, and care for others, regardless of their social background, ethnicity, or differing ideological views. This is reflected in the Islamic values of compassion, which mean bringing blessings to all beings. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every Muslim to maintain peace and harmony in life.

Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, play a crucial role in shaping children's character. Through their education, parents hope that their children will possess general knowledge (science and technology) as well as spiritual strength and religious commitment.

Religious education is generally defined as in-depth education regarding faith, piety, morals, and worship of God. Thus, religious education aims to develop a spiritual dimension that can influence human behavior in various aspects of life (Sukrin). This means that educational institutions must actively participate in spreading understanding and instilling the values of religious moderation in their students.

To combat radicalism, Islamic education must be balanced in teaching religious teachings. Islamic education aims to spread the values of goodness, peace, and harmony contained in Islamic teachings, while avoiding narrow/extreme interpretations that could fuel radicalism. An important part of the task of teachers and students is to provide a clear and broad understanding of tolerant and moderate education, as well as the concept of tauhid (the oneness of God) as the basis for an accurate understanding of religion.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has also taken numerous steps to promote religious moderation. This is primarily done to address current issues such as the rise of radicalism and various efforts to create erroneous understandings of religion. Therefore, it is crucial to address these issues by striving to implement religious moderation broadly and evenly. This means that religious moderation can be applied in national and state life, especially to create peace, unity and oneness.

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CONCLUSION

Islamic education is considered a means to promote the values of religious tolerance and reduce conflict and violence in Indonesia's diverse society. This country is rich in diverse cultures, ethnicities, traditions, beliefs, and more. This diversity creates numerous differences. This is one factor that encourages the emergence of radical ideologies. Therefore, religious moderation is crucial to avoid disputes that can lead to conflict.

Islamic education that emphasizes tolerance, justice, and moderation can help students understand Islam correctly and empower them through effective Islamic education. This education can be key to promoting a moderate, tolerant, and critical understanding of religious values.

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