



## RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS AND CHARACTER EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN INDONESIA

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### ABSTRACT

Issues of radicalism and intolerance became increasingly widespread in Indonesia. This was caused by the nation's own condition of diversity, including ethnic, cultural, regional, linguistic, and especially religious differences. Therefore, it was urgent to instill the values of religious moderation in students during the learning process in order to anticipate the emergence of radicalism and intolerance. The purpose of this study was to identify the content of Islamic religious education textbooks at the senior high school level in Indonesia regarding religious moderation, and to understand how the concept of religious moderation was presented in those textbooks. The results of the study showed that the Islamic religious education textbooks at the senior high school level in Indonesia included indicators of religious moderation under one main theme, namely Ethics (Akhlak). In terms of quantity, the religious moderation materials in the textbooks were still limited and had great potential to be further developed. However, conceptually, the books provided a good foundation for instilling moral reasoning ability to address issues of religious moderation.

**Keywords:** Islamic Religious Education, Religious Moderation, Textbook

### ABSTRAK

*Isu-isu tentang radikalisme dan intoleransi dewasa ini semakin marak di Indonesia, hal ini disebabkan oleh kondisi bangsa dengan kebinekragamannya sendiri, yaitu keragaman suku, budaya, daerah, bahasa, dan paling utama yaitu agama. Oleh sebab itu merupakan hal urgen untuk menanamkan kepada siswa dalam proses pembelajaran tentang materi-materi moderasi beragama untuk mengantisipasi munculnya radikalisme dan intoleransi tersebut. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi muatan buku ajar pendidikan agama Islam tingkat sekolah menengah atas di Indonesia tentang moderasi beragama dan bagaimana konsep moderasi beragama yang termuat dalam buku ajar tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa buku ajar pendidikan agama Islam tingkat sekolah menengah atas di Indonesia telah memuat indikator-indikator moderasi beragama dengan satu tema yaitu Akhlak. Berdasarkan kuantitas, materi moderasi beragama dalam buku pendidikan agama Islam ini memang masih sedikit dan masih sangat berpeluang untuk dikembangkan, namun secara konsep buku ini menghadirkan penanaman pola pikir yang baik tentang moral atau moral reasoning ability untuk menghadapi isu-isu moderasi beragama.*

**Kata Kunci:** Pendidikan agama Islam, moderasi beragama, buku ajar.

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, with 87% of its 260 million citizens identifying as Muslim. It is also the third-largest democracy by population, following India and the United States (Hefner, 2019). This demographic reality implies that being both a Muslim-majority and a democratic nation entails a commitment to Islamic values while simultaneously upholding human rights and individual freedoms. Indonesia's diverse ethnic, regional, and linguistic makeup contributes to its unique character as a nation. Furthermore, the country's foundation, shaped by both conservative and socialist-liberal



groups, continues to generate ongoing debates—particularly around religious issues (Agastia et al., 2020).

The recent rise in radicalism and intolerance suggests that the integration of Islamic and democratic values—which should be a source of uniqueness—has instead contributed to a negative image (Menchik, 2019). For instance, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), which advocates for the establishment of an Islamic state, and the Liberal Islam Network (JIL), which promotes religious freedom, represent ideological dissonance with the state ideology (Maksum, 2017). The 2019 presidential election, during which religious identities were weaponized, also signaled a decline in tolerance and accommodation toward local cultures (Hefner, 2019). Additionally, religious extremism has emerged within society, accompanied by the proliferation of hate speech, particularly during the presidential campaign, which eventually led to fractured interfaith relations (Tohor, 2019). The Indonesian government is determined to prevent the violence, terrorism, and radicalism experienced in the Middle East from taking root in Indonesia (Waghid & Davids, 2015).

In response, the government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has launched a religious moderation initiative aimed at promoting a moderate understanding and practice of Islam—one that is neither liberal nor ultra-conservative—among students in schools (Qolbi, 2019). Religious moderation is envisioned as a middle path to address the threat of religious extremism. Excessiveness in worship practices and rigid interpretations of religious teachings are seen as forms of extremism that the Indonesian government seeks to counter (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). The core indicators of religious moderation include national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local cultures (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Schools are thus targeted as primary institutions for instilling the foundations of religious moderation, requiring that curricula be infused with the values of moderate Islam.

One strategic approach to promoting religious moderation among youth is by integrating its core values into the formal curriculum at the senior high school level. Schools serve not only as centers for academic instruction but also as formative spaces where students develop moral and spiritual character. As such, they are among the most effective institutions for instilling religious values and for shaping the worldview of future citizens. This is especially crucial during adolescence, a pivotal developmental stage marked by the search for identity, values, principles, and future aspirations (Estrada et al., 2019). Adolescents are in the process of constructing their self-concept and moral reasoning, making it an ideal period to introduce and cultivate the principles of moderation in religion. The drive for self-esteem and a positive social identity becomes an internal motivation that can facilitate the acceptance and embodiment of religious moderation values (Crone & Fuligni, 2020). Therefore, educational interventions at this stage must be pedagogically sensitive and developmentally aligned, ensuring that affective, cognitive, and psychomotor competencies are holistically engaged in the learning process.

In the broader framework of Islamic education, the ultimate goal is the formation of *insan kamil*—the ideal human being who is spiritually, socially, and professionally balanced (Asrori, 2016). Achieving this requires not only the transmission of doctrinal knowledge but also the internalization of ethical and spiritual values through reflective learning processes (Ali & Bagley, 2015). In this context, religious moderation represents not merely a political



or social strategy, but an essential element of religious character building that encourages tolerance, humility, and ethical conduct. These values are further reinforced by the Indonesian government's national character education agenda, which places religious character as one of its central pillars. This value is defined by faith in the Almighty God and operationalized through the consistent practice of religious teachings, respect for interreligious diversity, and tolerance toward other beliefs (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017).

To ensure that these values are systematically conveyed, the national curriculum utilizes specific instructional materials, the most prominent of which is the textbook *Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti* (Islamic Religious Education and Character Development). This textbook is used across all three grade levels in senior high schools—Grades 10, 11, and 12—with each level having a dedicated volume comprising 11 chapters. In total, a graduating student is expected to have studied and internalized 33 chapters of content related to Islamic teachings and moral development.

Given this structured curriculum, it would be reasonable to assume that students are well-equipped with a solid foundation in Islamic religious values, including those of moderation, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. However, the central concern and urgency of this study lie in interrogating this assumption: To what extent are the values of religious moderation explicitly and systematically embedded within these textbooks? Are these values merely implied or do they receive focused attention in a manner that facilitates meaningful internalization by students? Answering these questions is vital to evaluating the efficacy of religious education in fostering a generation that upholds the principles of religious moderation in an increasingly pluralistic society.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis to examine the representation of religious moderation values in the *Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti* (Islamic Religious Education and Character Development) textbooks used at the senior high school (SMA) level in Indonesia. The primary data sources consist of textbooks published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, which are nationally implemented across Grades 10, 11, and 12. The analysis focuses on narratives, themes, and illustrations that reflect the principles of religious moderation, such as tolerance, non-violence, respect for diversity, and national commitment.

This qualitative research is characterized by the use of diverse data sources, multiple theoretical perspectives, various analytical techniques, and the involvement of several researchers (Raco, 2010). To address the research questions, the researcher applies inductive data analysis methods to assess the indicators of religious moderation present in textbooks used across all senior high school levels, and to construct a framework for how religious moderation values are embedded and transmitted in the SMA curriculum.

Content analysis is applied specifically to the *Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti* textbooks as a means to systematically explore and interpret the presence of religious moderation values. This analysis is guided by four key indicators of religious moderation as defined by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Badan Litbang dan Diklat



Kementerian Agama RI, 2019a, 2019b; Tohor, 2019). The data were collected from the textbooks used in Grades 10, 11, and 12, all of which were published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in the revised 2017 edition.

In this qualitative study, the researcher employs a deductive analysis to examine the presence of religious moderation values in the *Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti* (Islamic Religious Education and Character Development) textbooks, using the four key indicators of religious moderation as the analytical framework. This approach is complemented by a comprehensive understanding of contextual factors, including environmental and social influences. The study focuses specifically on the senior high school (SMA) level, as this stage represents a critical period during which students solidify their personal principles and chart the course of their future development.

This research is driven by a growing concern for the significance of religious moderation in educational settings, particularly at the high school level. The central objective is to investigate the extent to which Islamic Religious Education (PAI) textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools incorporate the values of religious moderation. Additionally, the study explores how these values are conceptualized and presented in the textbooks—considering the content, the pedagogical approach, and the indicators of religious moderation reflected in the learning process.

Thus, the research not only evaluates the presence of religious moderation values in the textbooks, but also delves into the form and depth of their presentation, assessing their effectiveness in fostering student character development centered on tolerance, inclusivity, and national commitment. Ultimately, the study aims to provide constructive recommendations for the development of more comprehensive and applicable teaching materials that can enhance the role of religious education in shaping a generation capable of coexisting peacefully in a diverse society, grounded in mutual respect and understanding.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Religious Moderation

Religious moderation is a concept that embodies a moderate or middle-path understanding, referring to the practice of embracing religion while avoiding excessive or violent attitudes (Yaakub et al., 2019). The term seeks to guide religious adherents toward accommodating their religious behavior in harmony with the sociocultural and environmental contexts in which they live (Liebman, 1983). Religious moderation also signifies a balanced religious attitude—both in perspective and in practice—that reflects a centrist position between two extremes, namely the far right and the far left (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019a). Religious moderation is seen as a key to fostering tolerance among individuals of different faiths. Within the framework of Indonesia's national policy, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia identifies four core indicators of religious moderation, namely:

1. National Commitment: Islam commands its adherents to obey their national leaders, as stated in the Qur'an, "*O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you*" (Qur'an, 4:83). The worldview and conduct of citizens should align with the leadership of the state. National commitment becomes



crucial in order to prevent divergence between religious communities and the collectively agreed upon national consensus. This commitment refers to the recognition and acceptance of Pancasila as the foundational ideology of the Indonesian state, as well as the 1945 Constitution (*Undang-Undang Dasar 1945*) and the regulations derived from it as the guiding principles for national life.

2. J Tolerance: Tolerance is the attitude of allowing and accepting others to believe and act according to their own convictions (Alabdulhadi, 2019). It implies mutual respect among different religions toward one another's faith and religious practices. As the Qur'an affirms, "*To you be your religion, and to me mine*" (Qur'an, 109:6).
3. K Non-violence: This refers to the rejection of violence in the implementation of religious values within social and political systems. It also entails the eradication of radical ideologies in both social and national spheres. The Qur'an explicitly states, "*There is no compulsion in religion*" (Qur'an, 2:256).
4. Accommodation of Local Culture: This indicator refers to the ability to embrace religious practices that incorporate elements of local cultural traditions. As the Qur'an teaches, "*O mankind! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another*" (Qur'an, 49:13). This emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity and mutual recognition within the broader religious framework

In the context of religious moderation in Indonesia, the notion of *moderate Islam* is characterized by at least five key features. First, religious preaching (*dakwah*) is delivered without violence, employing peaceful and persuasive approaches. Second, moderate Islam is open to modern life, including developments in science, technology, democracy, and human rights. Third, it emphasizes the use of reason and rationality in understanding Islamic teachings. Fourth, it adopts a contextual approach to interpreting religious sources. Fifth, *ijtihad*—the process of independent legal reasoning—is considered essential for addressing contemporary challenges.

However, these characteristics can be further expanded. Islamic moderation also encompasses tolerance, harmonious coexistence, and interfaith cooperation. All of these reflect the spirit of Islam as a *mercy to all creation* (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*). Consequently, non-violence, openness to diversity, contextual interpretation of divine revelation, and the constructive use of science and technology serve as foundational principles in responding to Indonesia's complex social dynamics. Differences are not to be feared but celebrated as a sign of maturity in a civil society.

In the realm of politics, a moderate stance is equally crucial. No nation can function without leadership. From an Islamic perspective, the presence of a leader or head of state is indispensable and ideally characterized by justice, strength, and trustworthiness. National leaders must be aware of their moral and spiritual responsibilities as part of the effort to uphold the noble values of Islam, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Indonesia is a nation where the majority of the population adheres to Islam and where governance is exercised over Muslim communities. Every nation has the right to establish a sovereign and unified government. It also has the right to formulate a constitution and legal frameworks that reflect its religious beliefs, values, and cultural traditions. Meanwhile,





individuals who identify as Muslims but reject the application of Islamic principles in governance adopt a position that is neither logically coherent nor consistent with the tenets of any religion.

Quraish Shihab outlines that justice (*al-'adalah*) encompasses at least four essential meanings. First, justice is understood as *equality*, particularly in terms of rights, rather than uniformity in all aspects. It signifies the equal entitlement of individuals to their respective rights. Second, justice is defined as *balance*, referring to a state of harmony within a system composed of diverse elements, each fulfilling different roles but oriented toward a shared purpose. Similar to the human body, balance does not imply uniformity; the size or function of each organ varies according to its role.

Third, justice entails the *recognition and fulfillment of individual rights*, that is, giving each person what they rightfully deserve. This is often interpreted as “putting things in their proper place,” and its opposite is injustice (*zulm*), which denotes a violation of rights. In this context, watering a fruit-bearing plant is considered just, while watering a thorn bush may be deemed unjust. Such a perspective gives rise to the concept of *social justice*. Fourth, justice is associated with a *Divine attribute*—it involves the maintenance of order and the continuity of existence by bestowing mercy in accordance with the recipient’s capacity. God’s justice is not merely legalistic but is a manifestation of His compassion, requiring that the principle of justice permeate every aspect of life: theology, law, ethics, and even the attitudes of love and aversion.

### Mapping of Religious Moderation Content and Values in the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

The research findings for each material at every grade level, chapter, and item contained therein are presented in the following data:

Islamic Religious Education and Character Development Materials.

**Table 1.**

Materi	Kelas 10	Kelas 11	Kelas 12
Al-Quran/ Hadith	1	0	0
Keimanan	3	2	4
Syariah	3	2	2
Akhlak	3	5	3
Sejarah Islam	1	2	2
Jumlah	11	11	11

As shown in Table 1, there are five Islamic religious subjects taught at each grade level. These subjects consist of the Quran and Hadith, faith (keimanan), Sharia, ethics (akhlak), and Islamic history. Each grade level has an equal number of chapters allocated for these subjects. Although the composition of the material varies, the total number of chapters



remains the same. In Table 1, Grade 10 has a larger portion devoted to faith, Sharia, and ethics. This figure indicates the urgency of instilling Islamic religious values in these three subjects.

In Grade 11, the largest portion is dedicated to ethics. Although there is no separate subject for the Quran and Hadith, verses from the Quran and Hadith are incorporated into the materials, serving as distinct lessons both in terms of tajwid (Quranic recitation rules) and memorization. Similarly, in Grade 12, faith and ethics are the subjects with the largest portions.

From this, it can be concluded that ethics constitute the largest portion of the curriculum across all senior high school grades (10–12). This highlights the importance of ethics as an indicator that can be observed in social life. Moreover, one of the key indicators of religious moderation is reflected in ethical behavior toward others, as the purpose of religion encompasses both vertical (relationship with God) and horizontal (relationship with fellow humans) dimensions.

#### Indicators of Religious Moderation at Each Grade Level

**Table 2**

Indikator	Kelas 10	Kelas 11	Kelas 12
Komitmen Kebangsaan	1	2	1
Toleransi	0	1	0
Nirdiskriminatif	0	1	0
Akomodatif Budaya Lokal	0	0	1
Jumlah	1	4	2

The ethics (akhlak) material, which occupies the largest portion, can be analyzed through the indicators of religious moderation values as presented in Table 2. There are 11 ethics topics taught to senior high school students, of which 7 contain elements of religious moderation values. It is also evident that not every indicator of religious moderation is covered in each grade level. In Grade 10, only one value is present, namely national commitment. The chapter under this material focuses on maintaining honesty as a reflection of personality and inner beauty.

In Grade 11, four chapters contain religious moderation values: "Daring to Live Honestly," "Obedient Behavior," "Competition in Goodness," and "Work Ethic." These chapters reflect the value of national commitment. The value of tolerance is included in the chapter "Tolerance as a Unifying Tool of the Nation." Additionally, the non-discrimination value is addressed in the subchapter "Avoiding Violent Behavior." Thus, the only indicator not included in any Grade 11 chapters is the accommodative attitude toward local culture.

In Grade 12, two chapters address religious moderation values: "United in Diversity" and "Democracy," which reflect national commitment. Another chapter, "Islam's Mercy for the



Archipelago," embodies the accommodative value toward local culture by presenting the development of Islam in Indonesia and the exemplary figures in Indonesian Islamic history.

**Table 3.** Items for Each Indicator of Religious Moderation

Item	Kelas 10	Kelas 11	Kelas 12
Ayat	3	10	4
Hadith	2	6	2
Bacaan	2	8	13
Aktivitas	4	8	9
Pertanyaan	5	30	30
Jumlah	16	62	58

Table 3 presents the items taught in each chapter that contain the values of religious moderation. The "verses" item refers to the number of Qur'anic verses provided as the foundational basis for strengthening the values of religious moderation at the senior high school level. Similarly, the "hadith" item indicates selected hadiths intended to reinforce the core material. Unlike the verses and hadiths, the next three items—readings, activities, and questions—serve as explanations, comprehension aids, and evaluation tools for the learning process.

Grade 11 holds the highest number of items containing religious moderation values, followed by Grades 12 and 10. There is a significant difference in the number of items in Grade 10, indicating that the teaching of religious moderation values in this grade is very limited. This is also reflected in the minimal number of evaluative questions designed to assess students' understanding of the material.

### **Morality as the Framework for Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education Textbooks**

The research findings indicate that religious moderation truly constitutes the core of the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education textbooks used in Indonesian Senior High Schools, although it tends to be presented in a general manner by giving greater emphasis to the Morality (Akhlaq) material than to other core topics. This means that the textbooks do not specifically present content based on indicators such as national commitment, tolerance, non-discrimination, and accommodation of local culture to instill religious moderation in students. Instead, they primarily rely on the general theme of Morality.

This demonstrates that the approach used in the textbooks still focuses on character building through general moral values, without explicitly linking them to the more contextual and contemporary concept of religious moderation. In other words, although the substance of religious moderation is implicitly reflected through the teachings of morality, the absence of explicit exploration of concrete indicators—such as respect for diversity, anti-extremism,





and national spirit—means that the potential for religious moderation education within these textbooks has not been fully optimized. In the context of Indonesia's pluralistic society, religious education in schools holds a strategic opportunity to systematically instill values of nationalism and tolerance.

Moreover, without explicit emphasis on current issues such as religious radicalism, social polarization, and the importance of interfaith dialogue, students risk understanding religion in a narrow and normative way, without being encouraged to think critically and reflectively about the social realities they face.

Based on the findings, there are 11 Morality (Akhlaq) topics from grades 10 to 12, of which 7 incorporate religious moderation values. This means that all indicators of religious moderation are encapsulated within the theme of Morality. The topic "Maintaining Honesty as a Reflection of Personality" in grade 10 represents the morality material with national commitment values; in grade 11, the chapters "Daring to Live Honestly" and "Obedient Behavior, Competition in Goodness, and Work Ethic" reflect national commitment values. Additionally, the chapter "Tolerance as a Unifying Tool for the Nation" clearly embodies the religious moderation value of tolerance, and within this chapter, there is a subchapter about avoiding violent behavior, representing the non-discrimination indicator of religious moderation. Meanwhile, in grade 12, there are two chapters: "United in Diversity and Democracy," reflecting the national commitment indicator, and "Islam's Mercy for the Archipelago," representing the accommodation of local culture.

The values of religious moderation encapsulated within the single theme of Morality (Akhlaq) align with Nawawi's (2011) description, where morality encompasses aspects of divinity, noble character, good and bad, right and wrong, care for others, cooperation, helpfulness, courage, steadfastness, justice, honesty, integrity, independence and self-confidence, loyalty, patience, pride, resourcefulness, respect, tolerance, obedience, commitment, gratitude, and responsibility. All these indicators of religious moderation are encompassed within the scope of morality, which, if developed appropriately, can serve as a strong foundation for cultivating inclusive and nationally-minded student personalities.

However, it is important to note that the mere presence of these values within the theme of Morality does not automatically guarantee a comprehensive understanding of the concept of religious moderation unless supported by contextual and participatory pedagogical strategies. In this regard, the role of teachers is crucial in interpreting and bridging moral values with the diversity realities faced by students, as well as fostering critical awareness about the importance of peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society. Therefore, although the substance of religious moderation is represented implicitly in the Morality material, an applicative, reflective, and contextual learning approach is still necessary to ensure that these messages truly take root in students' everyday behavior.

On the other hand, morality reflects how an individual understands and applies religious teachings in daily life (Duriez & Soenens 2006) suggest that individuals should not only comprehend religion at the content level but also translate this content into praiseworthy behaviors, which requires a kind of moral reasoning ability. Similarly, Tirri, Nokelainen, and Mahkonen (2009) state that intelligence, morality, and religiosity are three interrelated components, with the practical basis of religious moderation rooted in morality or Akhlaq



itself. Agulanna (2010) concluded in his research that successful religious practice lies in the morality that emerges within its followers, which gradually forms a society with strong brotherhood, mutual enrichment of individual potentials, and no class or division resulting from social constructs, including religion. This Islamic religious education textbook for senior high schools in Indonesia aims to guide students not only to understand religion conceptually but also to cultivate and embody commendable moral character. The goal, reflected in its seven indicators of religious moderation, is to develop moderate individuals who are capable of demonstrating behaviors aligned with religious moderation.

Conceptually, the religious moderation content in this Islamic religious education textbook for senior high schools in Indonesia is presented in a very systematic and clear manner. The indicators of religious moderation are not simply conveyed to students but are delivered through a deductive sequence. Table 3 shows that the textbook first presents the foundational basis explaining why certain indicators of religious moderation are important to study and apply in daily life. This foundation consists of selected relevant verses from the Qur'an and hadiths.

Subsequently, the textbook provides readings that serve as theoretical frameworks or reviews related to specific indicators, followed by activities in the form of assignments designed to help students apply the foundational texts (verses and hadiths) and theories within real social contexts. Finally, the textbook also includes evaluative questions. This structure indicates that pedagogically, the textbook adopts an integrative approach that links religious texts, moral theory, and social practice.

However, challenges remain in ensuring that the provided activities and evaluations effectively stimulate students' reflective awareness regarding contemporary issues such as intolerance, radicalism, or social injustice. Without contextual adaptation in case studies, classroom discussions, and more practical forms of assignments, the learning process risks becoming stagnant at a merely normative level. Therefore, there is a need to develop content that encourages students not only to understand religious teachings theoretically but also to project these teachings into a more moderate, just, and inclusive religious and national life. Such an approach not only strengthens the connection between religion and social reality but also becomes key to nurturing a younger generation that is both religious and tolerant.

Thus, this Islamic religious education textbook for senior high schools in Indonesia clearly incorporates indicators of religious moderation, summarized under the overarching theme of Morality (Akhlak). Its presentation follows a clear and systematic pattern, moving from general principles—such as scriptural evidence and theory—to specific, practical assignments that students must complete to translate these principles and theories into particular social contexts or current issues. This means that religious moderation in this textbook is not merely an abstract concept but also assists students in developing moral reasoning abilities—the capacity for independent moral judgment. It equips students to rationalize the scriptural evidence and theories they possess into appropriate and wise actions when confronted with social issues, specifically those related to religious moderation, which continuously evolve.

Quantitatively, this Islamic religious education textbook for senior high schools in Indonesia contains only seven units related to religious moderation spread across three years, from



grade 10 to grade 12. However, Indonesia is a country characterized by cultural diversity and pluralism, where issues of tension and conflict—whether religiously motivated or not—frequently occur (Akhmadi, 2019). Moreover, with the development of the digital world, religious narratives have become increasingly diverse and can potentially trigger new forms of tension (Hefni, 2020). Therefore, issues of tension will continue to emerge in new and varied forms. Although the textbook covers only seven topics on religious moderation, it aims to equip students with a sound mindset to face evolving contemporary issues that may be entirely different from previous ones.

On the other hand, Indonesia is indeed a nation distinguished by its diversity—regional, ethnic, religious, and linguistic (Fitriani et al., 2005). This diversity makes Indonesia unique, with a rich repertoire of teachings, traditions, and guidance regarding morality (*akhlak*). For instance, in Java, the concept of *ngangsa-angsa*, *ngaya-aya*, *golek benere dhewe* emphasizes that life should always reflect noble and commendable behavior (Ghufron, 2010). Even the Ministry of National Education, as cited by Rachmah (2013), has identified 18 core values distinctive to the Indonesian nation, derived from religion, Pancasila, culture, and the national education objectives. These values include religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, patriotism, love of the homeland, appreciation of achievement, friendliness/communication skills, peace-loving, a love of reading, environmental care, social concern, and responsibility. Thus, the character of the Indonesian nation, grounded in the philosophy of Pancasila, reflects a people who cherish peace, politeness, respect for others, religiosity, and other virtues.

Therefore, the theme of morality (*akhlak*), which encompasses the indicators of religious moderation in this Islamic religious education textbook, is highly appropriate for the Indonesian context, as it aligns well with the national identity and character of Indonesia itself. In accordance with the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 22 of 2006, the scope of Islamic religious education is to cultivate individuals who continuously strive to perfect their faith, piety, and noble character, encompassing ethics, morals, and good conduct (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia No. 22 Tahun 2006, n.d.). Furthermore, as previously noted, *akhlak* or character formation is the ultimate goal of education in Islam (Ainiyah, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that the Islamic religious and character education textbooks for senior high schools in Indonesia already incorporate religious moderation, albeit with only seven materials aligned with the indicators of religious moderation. What is unique about these textbooks is their emphasis on cultivating a sound mindset regarding how to transform the still abstract religious teachings into a fundamental basis and translate them into action—that is, noble character or moral reasoning ability. This noble character becomes the cornerstone of religious moderation.

The recommendation of this study is that materials on religious moderation should be added in grade 10, particularly focusing on values of tolerance and non-discrimination. Since grade 10 marks the first year of senior high school, it is crucial to instill religious moderation values extensively at this stage to ensure that adolescent students develop strong and well-directed principles. The addition of such materials is important not only in terms of time allocation



but also regarding content and methods of delivery. Values such as national commitment, respect for diversity, and the ability to engage in interfaith dialogue need to be presented in a contextual, practical, and socially relevant manner.

Furthermore, teachers should be equipped with training to integrate the values of religious moderation into a more participatory and reflective learning process. Thus, textbooks and the learning process will not only serve as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge but also as a vehicle for shaping a religious character that is inclusive, critical, and nationally conscious.

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