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## **INTEGRATING LOCAL WISDOM INTO ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM TO STRENGTHEN RELIGIOUS MODERATION: LESSONS FROM MADURESE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CULTURE**

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### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana integrasi kearifan lokal dalam kurikulum pendidikan Islam dapat memperkuat moderasi beragama di lingkungan sekolah. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan perspektif sosio-kultural. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, analisis dokumen, dan focus group discussion yang melibatkan guru, pimpinan sekolah, dan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa moderasi beragama dapat diperkuat secara efektif ketika kearifan lokal diintegrasikan secara sistematis ke dalam materi kurikulum, praktik pembelajaran, budaya sekolah, dan kebijakan kelembagaan. Tradisi budaya, nilai-nilai masyarakat, dan praktik keagamaan lokal berfungsi sebagai sumber belajar kontekstual yang membantu siswa memahami moderasi sebagai pengalaman hidup, bukan sekadar konsep teoritis. Keteladanan guru, pembelajaran dialogis, dan pembiasaan melalui aktivitas sehari-hari juga berperan penting dalam membentuk sikap toleran dan seimbang. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi model penguatan moderasi beragama berbasis kearifan lokal yang mencakup integrasi kurikulum, keteladanan guru, budaya sekolah, dan dukungan kelembagaan sebagai satu kesatuan proses pendidikan yang holistik.*

**Kata kunci:** Moderasi Beragama, Kearifan Lokal, Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam, Pendidikan Karakter.

### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine how the integration of local wisdom into the Islamic education curriculum can strengthen religious moderation in school settings. Using a qualitative approach with a socio-cultural perspective, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, document analysis, and focus group discussions involving teachers, school leaders, and students. The findings show that religious moderation can be effectively strengthened when local wisdom is systematically integrated into curriculum content, learning practices, school culture, and institutional policies. Cultural traditions, community values, and local religious practices function as contextual learning resources that help students understand moderation as a lived experience rather than an abstract concept. Teacher role modeling, dialogical learning, and habituation through daily activities also play a significant role in shaping tolerant and balanced attitudes. The study contributed a local wisdom-based model consisting of curriculum integration, teacher example, school culture, and institutional support as key components for strengthening religious moderation in Islamic education.

**Keywords:** Religious Moderation, Local Wisdom, Islamic Education Curriculum, Character Education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation has become a crucial issue in contemporary global society, particularly in multicultural countries where religious diversity intersects with social, cultural, and political dynamics. International organizations emphasize that education plays a central role in preventing intolerance, radicalism, and social conflict by promoting inclusive values, dialogue, and mutual respect (Anas et al., 2025; Zaluchu et al., 2025). In the context of Muslim societies, religious moderation is often associated with the principles of balance, tolerance, and justice, which enable individuals to live harmoniously within pluralistic environments (Suyudi & Putra, 2022; Zurayah & Lubis, 2026). Therefore, strengthening religious moderation through education is widely recognized as an essential strategy for building peaceful and cohesive societies in the modern era.

In Indonesia, religious moderation has become a national priority in educational development due to the country's highly diverse socio-religious composition. The Ministry of Religious Affairs promotes moderation values such as *tawassuṭ* (moderation), *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), and *tawāzun* (balance) as fundamental principles that should be integrated into Islamic education at all levels (Sayyi, Mashuri, et al., 2025; Shawmi et al., 2025). Schools are expected not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to cultivate attitudes that support social harmony and national unity. Previous studies show that strengthening moderation through education requires contextual learning approaches that connect religious teachings with students' social realities and cultural environments (Gule, 2025; Ichsan et al., 2024).

One important approach to strengthening religious moderation in schools is through curriculum development that integrates cultural and local wisdom values into learning. Local wisdom reflects the historical experience, social practices, and moral traditions of a community, making it a relevant medium for character education (Syarif et al., 2024; Zulkarnain et al., 2025). Research in multicultural education indicates that curriculum content linked to local culture helps students develop empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity because learning becomes meaningful and connected to daily life (Atwater et al., 1994; Banks, 1994; Pusch, 1979). In Islamic education, integrating local wisdom into the curriculum allows religious values to be understood not only textually but also contextually within real social interactions.

Local content subjects in the Indonesian curriculum provide opportunities for schools to incorporate regional culture, traditions, and social practices into the learning process. Several studies indicate that local content can function as an effective instrument for strengthening character education when it is designed to internalize ethical and social values rather than merely introduce cultural knowledge (Amsal et al., 2020; Kartini' et al., 2025). In regions with strong Islamic

cultural traditions, local content can also become a medium for strengthening religious moderation by showing how religious teachings have historically interacted with local culture in peaceful and accommodative ways (Naim & Sauqi, 2008; Sa'dullah & Hajam, 2025; Syathori, 2023). This integration allows students to understand that religious life develops through dialogue between doctrine and culture.

Previous research has examined religious moderation in Islamic education from various perspectives, including curriculum development, teacher roles, and school culture. Studies show that teachers play a decisive role as role models in shaping students' moderate attitudes through daily interaction and classroom practices (Huda, 2024; Lickona, 2022). Other research highlights that habituation activities, collaborative learning, and dialogical discussion are effective in cultivating tolerance and openness among students (Gasser et al., 2022; Williams & Gantt, 2012). However, most studies focus on general Islamic education settings, while fewer studies explore how local socio-religious culture specifically contributes to the internalization of moderation values within the school curriculum.

Research on local wisdom in Madurese society shows that religious life in this region is closely intertwined with cultural traditions, community solidarity, and respect for religious scholars. Madurese socio-religious culture reflects values of respect, balance, and social harmony that are compatible with the concept of religious moderation (Sayyi et al., 2022; Takdir et al., 2024; Wahab et al., 2020). Nevertheless, existing studies mostly discuss Madurese culture in sociological or anthropological contexts, and only limited research examines how these cultural values can be systematically integrated into the Islamic education curriculum to strengthen students' moderate religious attitudes. This indicates the need for empirical studies that connect local culture, curriculum practice, and religious moderation within real educational settings.

Based on these considerations, this study investigates how local wisdom can be integrated into the Islamic education curriculum to strengthen religious moderation in a junior secondary school setting. The research focuses on SMP Nurul Iman Bangkalan, a school that actively develops local content learning rooted in Madurese socio-religious culture. The study examines how moderation values are embedded in local content subjects, how teachers act as role models, how school culture supports habituation of tolerant behavior, and how institutional policies provide flexibility for contextual curriculum development. Through this focus, the study seeks to understand how local culture-based learning contributes to the formation of inclusive and balanced religious attitudes among students.

This research aims to provide a conceptual and practical understanding of how integrating local wisdom into the Islamic education curriculum can



strengthen religious moderation in schools. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of contextual Islamic education that is responsive to cultural diversity and social change, while also supporting global efforts to promote peaceful and inclusive societies as emphasized in Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education and Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive institutions. By examining the experience of SMP Nurul Iman Bangkalan, this study offers insights that may inform the design of culturally grounded educational strategies for strengthening religious moderation in diverse educational contexts.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design with a socio-cultural approach to explore how local wisdom is integrated into the Islamic education curriculum to strengthen religious moderation. Qualitative research is appropriate for understanding social phenomena in depth, particularly when the focus is on meaning, experience, and contextual practices within educational settings (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Hamilton & Finley, 2019). A socio-cultural perspective was used because the study examines the interaction between curriculum practices, religious values, and local culture in shaping students' attitudes. This approach allows the researcher to analyze how cultural traditions and social interactions influence educational processes and the internalization of religious moderation values in schools (Anchunda et al., 2025; Mukhibat et al., 2024).

The research was conducted at SMP Nurul Iman Bangkalan, Indonesia, which was selected purposively because the school actively develops local content learning based on Madurese socio-religious culture. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to select participants who have rich information related to the research focus (Patton, 2014). The participants consisted of the principal, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, local content teachers, curriculum managers, and students who were directly involved in learning activities related to local content. These participants were considered capable of providing comprehensive information about curriculum implementation, school culture, and strategies used to strengthen religious moderation through culturally grounded learning practices (Miles et al., 2013; Schreier, 2012).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and focus group discussions (FGD). In-depth interviews were used to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and strategies related to the integration of moderation values into local content learning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Observation was conducted to examine classroom interactions, habituation activities, and school culture that reflect religious moderation practices. Document analysis included curriculum documents, lesson plans, and school policies related to local content. In addition, focus group discussions were used to obtain collective

perspectives from teachers and students regarding the role of local wisdom in shaping moderate religious attitudes (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017; Yin, 2010).

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This model allows researchers to analyze qualitative data continuously throughout the research process to obtain valid and meaningful findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Miles et al., 2013). The credibility of the data was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time to confirm the consistency of information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). Through this procedure, the study was able to produce a comprehensive description of how local wisdom-based curriculum practices contribute to strengthening religious moderation in the socio-religious context of Madurese culture.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Integration of Local Wisdom into the Curriculum to Strengthen Religious Moderation

Data obtained from interviews, observations, document analysis, and focus group discussions at SMP Nurul Iman Bangkalan indicate that the integration of local wisdom into the Islamic education curriculum is intentionally designed to strengthen students' religious moderation. Curriculum documents, lesson plans, and school policies show that local content subjects are not only intended to introduce regional culture but also to internalize values of *tawassuṭ* (moderation), *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), and *tawāzun* (balance). Interviews with teachers confirmed that learning materials frequently include Madurese Islamic traditions, stories of local scholars, and socio-religious practices that emphasize harmony between religious teachings and local culture. Observation of classroom activities also showed that discussions often connect religious concepts with students' daily cultural experiences.

Teachers explained that integrating local wisdom makes religious moderation easier for students to understand because the examples are taken from their own social environment. One teacher stated that moderation values are taught through local stories, community traditions, and discussions about differences in religious practices, so that students learn to respect diversity without feeling that their beliefs are threatened. Similar information was found in curriculum documents that allow teachers flexibility to adapt learning materials to the local socio-religious context. This triangulation of interview, observation, and document data shows that local wisdom functions as a practical medium for strengthening religious moderation within the curriculum.

### The Role of Teachers as Moderation Role Models in Learning Practices

Findings also show that teachers play a central role in strengthening religious moderation through daily learning practices. Interviews with Islamic Education teachers, local content teachers, and the principal indicate that teachers



are expected to demonstrate inclusive, fair, and respectful attitudes in both classroom instruction and informal interaction. Observation data confirm that teachers avoid exclusive or judgmental language and instead encourage dialogue when students express different opinions. In several classroom sessions, teachers invited students to compare different religious practices and discuss them respectfully without labeling them as right or wrong.

FGD results with students support these findings, showing that students perceive teachers as role models whose behavior strongly influences their attitudes. Students reported that teachers often remind them that differences in religious practice are part of social reality and should be addressed through discussion rather than conflict. School documents also emphasize that teacher behavior is considered part of character education. The consistency between interview, observation, and document data indicates that teacher role modeling is a key factor in the internalization of religious moderation values.

### **Habituation of Religious Moderation through School Culture and Daily Activities**

Another important finding is that religious moderation is strengthened not only through classroom instruction but also through habituation in school culture. Observations show that routine activities such as group discussions, collaborative assignments, religious celebrations, and joint social activities create opportunities for students to practice tolerance and cooperation. Students are encouraged to work with classmates from different social and religious backgrounds, which helps them develop openness and mutual respect, based on Figure 1.



Figure 1. Observation of Moderation-Integrated Islamic Religious Education Learning

Interviews with students confirmed that they are accustomed to discussing differences rather than immediately rejecting other opinions. Some students stated that when disagreements occur, teachers usually ask them to explain their

arguments and listen to others before making conclusions. School activity schedules and policy documents also show that collaborative and dialogical activities are intentionally designed to build character. The consistency of findings across interviews, observations, and documents indicates that school culture functions as an effective arena for practicing religious moderation in everyday life.

### **Institutional Support for Local Wisdom-Based Curriculum Development**

Data also reveal that institutional policy plays an important role in supporting the integration of local wisdom into the curriculum. Interviews with the principal and curriculum coordinators show that the school provides flexibility for teachers to develop local content materials according to the socio-religious context of the community. Curriculum guidelines allow teachers to include local traditions, community practices, and contemporary social issues in learning activities as long as they support character education.

Document analysis confirms that local content is formally recognized as part of the strategy for strengthening religious moderation. Coordination meetings between teachers, school leaders, and curriculum managers are regularly conducted to ensure consistency between classroom learning, school activities, and institutional goals. According to one curriculum coordinator, teachers are encouraged to adapt materials to real social situations so that students can apply moderation values in daily life. These findings indicate that institutional support ensures that the integration of local wisdom is implemented systematically rather than incidentally.

### **Changes in Students' Religious Attitudes after Local Wisdom-Based Learning**

The data also show observable changes in students' attitudes after participating in learning that integrates local wisdom and moderation values. Interviews and FGDs with students indicate that they become more open to differences in religious practice and more careful in responding to religious information, especially from social media. Several students explained that they now prefer to ask teachers or discuss with friends when encountering religious opinions that seem extreme or contradictory.

Observation of classroom discussions supports this finding, showing that students are more willing to listen to different viewpoints and avoid blaming others. Teachers also reported that students show greater respect during discussions about religious issues compared to previous years. These results suggest that local wisdom-based learning not only influences cognitive understanding but also shapes students' attitudes and behavior. The integration of curriculum, teacher modeling, school culture, and institutional policy contributes to the development of inclusive and balanced religious character. Main findings on the integration of local wisdom into the curriculum to strengthen religious moderation are described in Table 1.



Table 1. Main Findings on the Integration of Local Wisdom into the Curriculum to Strengthen Religious Moderation

Theme	Empirical Findings	Data Source	Contribution to Religious Moderation
Curriculum Integration	Local content includes Madurese traditions, Islamic history, and social practices	Interview, document, observation	Students understand religion in a cultural context
Teacher Role Modeling	Teachers demonstrate inclusive and dialogical attitudes	Interview, observation, FGD	Values internalized through example
School Culture Habituation	Routine activities promote dialogue and cooperation	Observation, interview, document	Moderation is practiced in daily interaction
Institutional Support	Curriculum policy allows contextual material development	Interview, document	Implementation becomes systematic
Student Attitude Change	Students are more tolerant and critical toward extreme views	Interview, FGD, observation	Moderation reflected in behavior

As shown in Table 1, the strengthening of religious moderation at SMP Nurul Iman Bangkalan occurs through the interaction of curriculum integration, teacher role modeling, school culture, and institutional support. The triangulation of multiple data sources confirms that integrating local wisdom into the Islamic education curriculum provides a contextual and effective strategy for developing moderate religious attitudes.

The findings indicate that integrating local wisdom into the Islamic education curriculum provides an effective approach for strengthening religious moderation in school environments. When cultural traditions, community practices, and local religious experiences are included in learning materials, students are able to understand religious teachings in a contextual manner. Curriculum integration allows moderation values such as tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity to be presented through examples that are familiar to students' social lives. Previous studies state that a curriculum connected to cultural context increases students' acceptance of moral values because learning becomes meaningful and relevant to their experience (Tilaar, 2004).

This result is consistent with contextual learning theory, which explains that knowledge is more easily internalized when it is related to real situations encountered by learners (Erbil, 2020; Johnson, 2007). Learning that connects religious teachings with local socio-religious traditions enables students to interpret moderation not only as a concept but as a practical attitude. In classroom interaction, the use of cultural narratives, local history, and social practices helps students understand that differences in religious expression are part of social

reality. Such contextualization prevents rigid interpretation and encourages a more balanced understanding of religion.

The integration of local wisdom also reflects the principles of culturally responsive education, which emphasize that teaching should respect students' cultural identity in order to be effective (Firmando et al., 2024; Hattan et al., 2024; Sayyi, Asmuki, et al., 2025). When local traditions are used as learning resources, students feel that their cultural background is valued, which increases engagement and openness to new perspectives. This approach allows religious moderation to be understood as compatible with local culture rather than as an external or imposed concept. Consequently, students develop a more flexible and inclusive attitude toward religious diversity.

These findings strengthen previous research showing that culture-based curriculum design contributes to the development of inclusive character in multicultural societies (Ichsan et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024; Sayyi & Fithriyah, 2025). However, the present study demonstrates that the effectiveness of this approach depends on systematic implementation through curriculum planning, teaching practice, and institutional support. When local wisdom is positioned as part of the learning structure rather than as supplementary material, it can function as a strategic instrument for strengthening religious moderation in Islamic education.

Another important finding is that teacher behavior plays a decisive role in the internalization of moderation values. Students tend to adopt attitudes demonstrated by teachers, especially when these attitudes are consistently practiced in daily interaction. This finding supports character education theory, which emphasizes that moral values are formed through modeling, habituation, and social experience rather than through instruction alone (Lickona, 2022; Sutikno et al., 2025). Teachers who demonstrate fairness, openness, and respect for differences create a learning atmosphere that encourages students to develop similar attitudes.

Dialogical learning also appears as an important pedagogical strategy in strengthening moderation. Classroom discussions, reflective conversations, and opportunities to express opinions allow students to understand differences without feeling threatened. According to constructivist theory, knowledge is formed through social interaction and reflection, not through one-way transmission (García-Carrión et al., 2020; Nimasari et al., 2023; Radino & Mubarok, 2025). When students are encouraged to discuss religious issues openly, they learn to evaluate different viewpoints critically and respectfully. This process supports the development of balanced and tolerant attitudes.

Teacher communication style also influences students' perspectives on religion. When teachers avoid rigid or judgmental explanations and instead emphasize understanding and dialogue, students become more willing to accept



diversity. Research on moral development shows that supportive communication helps learners develop empathy and social responsibility (Fithriyah et al., 2025; Semião et al., 2023). In this context, moderation values are strengthened not only through curriculum content but also through the way teachers interact with students during learning activities.

These findings confirm that strengthening religious moderation requires teachers to function as role models as well as instructors. Previous studies have shown that character education programs are less effective when values are taught theoretically without consistent behavioral example (Mausul, 2025; Sayyi et al., 2023; Suparno et al., 2025). Therefore, the success of moderation education depends on the combination of contextual learning and teacher modeling, which together create an environment where students can experience moderation as part of everyday life.

The study also shows that school culture plays a significant role in shaping moderate attitudes. Values of tolerance, cooperation, and respect are strengthened through daily interaction, collaborative activities, and shared responsibilities. This supports the concept of hidden curriculum, which states that many educational values are learned informally through social experience rather than through formal lessons (Firmando et al., 2024; Johnson, 2007; Syathori, 2023). When students repeatedly experience respectful communication and cooperation, they gradually develop similar attitudes in their own behavior.

Habituation activities such as group work, discussions, and joint religious events provide opportunities for students to practice moderation in real situations. According to social learning theory, attitudes are formed through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within a social environment (Bandura, 1977; Fryling et al., 2011). When students observe inclusive behavior from teachers and peers, they tend to adopt the same pattern of interaction. This explains why moderation values become stronger when supported by consistent daily practice.

An inclusive school environment also allows students to express opinions without fear of rejection. Such conditions support the development of democratic and tolerant attitudes, which are essential components of religious moderation. Studies on multicultural education show that inclusive environments help learners understand diversity as a normal part of social life (Fryling et al., 2011; Sayyi, Muslimin, et al., 2025). When differences are discussed openly, students learn to respond with dialogue rather than conflict.

These findings indicate that strengthening moderation requires the integration of curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture. Without supportive daily interaction, moderation remains a theoretical concept. A school environment that encourages cooperation, dialogue, and mutual respect provides a practical space where moderation values can be experienced directly, making character formation more sustainable and meaningful.

Based on the findings, a model for strengthening religious moderation through local wisdom-based curriculum integration can be formulated. The model consists of four interrelated components: curriculum integration, teacher role modeling, school culture habituation, and institutional support. These components work together to form a holistic educational process in which moderation values are learned cognitively, experienced socially, and practiced behaviorally. Holistic character education theory states that effective value formation requires the integration of knowledge, attitude, and action (Amsal et al., 2020; Lickona, 2022).

The first component of the model is curriculum integration, where local wisdom is used as a learning resource to explain religious values in a contextual way. The second component is teacher role modeling, which ensures that moderation values are reflected in daily interaction. The third component is school culture, which provides opportunities for habituation through social activities. The fourth component is institutional support, including curriculum flexibility and coordination among educators. Similar frameworks are discussed in culturally responsive education, which emphasizes the importance of aligning curriculum with cultural context (Afandi & Sayyi, 2023; Nurdin & Jamila, 2025; Permana & Widodo, 2025).

This model shows that religious moderation cannot be strengthened through a single instructional method. Instead, it requires a comprehensive strategy involving curriculum design, teaching practice, and school management. Previous studies often discuss these elements separately, but the present findings indicate that their integration is essential for effective character formation. When these components operate simultaneously, moderation values become part of students' daily experience rather than merely academic knowledge.

The proposed model provides both theoretical and practical contributions to Islamic education. Theoretically, it supports the idea that culturally grounded curriculum integration is effective for character development in diverse societies. Practically, it offers a framework that can be adapted in different educational contexts with different cultural backgrounds. By integrating local wisdom into the curriculum, schools can develop moderation education that is contextual, sustainable, and relevant to contemporary social challenges.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This study concludes that the integration of local wisdom into the Islamic education curriculum represents an effective strategy for strengthening religious moderation in educational settings. The findings demonstrate that moderation values can be internalized more meaningfully when learning is connected to socio-cultural traditions familiar to students, allowing religious teachings to be understood in a contextual and balanced manner. The strengthening of religious moderation occurs through the interaction of several key elements, namely



curriculum integration based on local culture, teacher role modeling, habituation through school culture, and institutional support that enables flexible and contextual learning. These components form a holistic educational process in which moderation is not only taught cognitively but also practiced in daily interaction. The study contributes theoretically by showing that culturally grounded curriculum integration can support character formation in multicultural societies, and practically by offering a model of moderation education that can be adapted in various educational contexts to promote inclusive, tolerant, and balanced religious attitudes.

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