

## INNOVATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS' LEARNING IN INSTRUCTIVE VALUES OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION AT SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 07 MEDAN

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the learning innovations implemented by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in instilling the values of religious moderation at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, this study collected data through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The results showed that PAI teachers implemented various learning innovations, such as the use of digital technology, interactive discussions, and experience-based approaches to improve students' understanding of religious moderation. This strategy is effective in forming inclusive and tolerant attitudes in students, even though there are obstacles such as the diversity of student backgrounds and the influence of the social environment.

**Keywords:** *Learning innovation, Islamic Religious Education, religious moderation.*

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia is blessed with a variety of religions, cultures, tribes, and traditions. On the one hand, this diversity becomes a social force that can strengthen national unity through the principle of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Lestari, 2015). However, on the other hand, diversity can also give rise to potential conflicts if society does not uphold the values of tolerance and mutual respect. In the context of religion, differences in beliefs and interests often become challenges in creating social harmony.

Diversity in Indonesia reflects the need to strengthen religious moderation as one of the strategic values that support harmony in community life (Mangala Wiriyana Tantra, 2024). Religious moderation includes attitudes of tolerance, justice, and balance, which are very important to prevent extremism in the form of radicalism or narrow fanaticism. These values need to be instilled early on through education, especially in the younger generation, so that they are able to live side by side harmoniously in a pluralistic society.

Moderation is one of the noble moral values in Islam that needs more attention. The foundation of this attitude is rooted in the teachings of the Koran and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. One of the arguments underlying the importance of moderation can be found in the Al-Qur'an, especially in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143 which reads:

Allah is the Most Gracious My name is Muhammad And Allah is the Most Gracious O Allah, O Lord, And the Lord Kanta The Lord of the worlds O Allah O Allah Ain Allah In the name of Allah Lorafo Rahim Allah is the Most Gracious Allah is the Most Gracious Hdiy Allah is the Most Gracious  
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*Meaning: And so (also) We have made you (Muslims), a just and chosen people so that you can be witnesses to human (deeds) and so that the Messenger (Muhammad) is a witness to your (deeds). And We did not determine the Qibla which will be your Qibla (now) but so that We know (so that it is clear) who follows the Messenger and who deserts. And indeed (moving the Qibla) is very difficult, except for those who have been guided by Allah; and Allah will not waste your faith. Indeed, Allah is Most Gracious, Most Merciful to humans.*

The verse explains that the measure of moderation of the people is determined by the ability to establish harmonious relationships with other communities. Muslims are considered moderate if they are able to live side by side with other people in peace and mutual respect. Moderate attitudes also reflect balance in religion, where a person does not act fanatically, let alone to the point of blind fanaticism. Moreover, blind fanaticism that leads to judgment or blasphemy against others can cause religious conflicts that have the potential to divide the Indonesian nation

(Qorib & Hidayat, 2022). Therefore, strengthening the values of religious moderation from an early age is important. By understanding religious moderation, they can grow up with an open attitude, appreciate differences, and be able to work together with various groups, both in terms of tribe, ethnicity, culture, and religion. This understanding will help them interact harmoniously and position themselves well in a diverse society (Zuliana et al., 2024).

In this regard, education plays a crucial role in creating a harmonious social life and respecting diversity. In this context, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the compulsory subjects in Indonesian schools, as mandated in the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 Article 37 Paragraph (2), which requires the education curriculum to include religious education. Islamic Religious Education not only aims to provide religious understanding, but also plays a role in shaping the character of students so that they have faith, piety, and noble morals. (Ainiyah, 2013). Islamic Religious Education aims to strengthen beliefs, deepen understanding, increase appreciation, and encourage students' experiences in practicing Islamic teachings. Thus, they can become individuals who are devoted to Allah SWT and are able to apply religious values in their personal, social, and national lives. (Sukeriyadi & Duraesa, 2023). In a multicultural society like Indonesia, this goal also includes strengthening the values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, respecting differences, and being inclusive in community life.

Without education, individuals cannot develop optimally. In addition, education plays a role in improving skills, shaping character, and building a dignified civilization in order to create an intelligent and empowered society. (Pasaribu & Pohan, 2024). However, in reality, the learning methods used in Islamic Religious Education still tend to be conventional, such as lectures and memorization, so that students are less interested in studying the material being taught. This has an impact on the difficulty of the values of religious moderation being internalized effectively. In fact, these values are very relevant to students' daily lives, especially in a diverse society. As Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13:

لَتَعَارَفُوا ۗ Shabaza And He is the Most Gracious وَجَعَلَكُمْ Man The Lord And the Lord'.Yaya Allah is the Most Gracious Ainun And Allah is the Most Gracious  
Ya Allah, the Most Gracious,,Ain Allah O Allah أَنْتُمْ ۗ Ain O Lord, ... O Allah Allah is the Most Gracious  
*It means; "O mankind, indeed We created you from a man and a woman and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing."*

This word emphasizes the importance of living side by side by respecting differences. In this case, Islamic Religious Education teachers play a central role not only as a deliverer of teaching materials, but also as a facilitator who is able to instill the values of religious moderation through an innovative approach. Various studies also show that innovation in Islamic Religious Education learning can increase the effectiveness of instilling religious moderation values. For example, Anwar's (2020) research shows that project-based learning methods can improve students' understanding of religious moderation values.

Hasanah's (2021) study also revealed that the integration of technology in learning, such as the use of interactive media and digital applications, can attract students' interest and facilitate the understanding of abstract concepts, including the values of moderation (Siringoringo & Alfaridzi, 2024). In addition, experience-based approaches, such as simulations or role-playing, allow students to understand the values of moderation through situations that are relevant to their lives.

At SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan, the diversity of students is reflected in their diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. These differences are influenced by the family environment, previous learning experiences, and information obtained from social media and the internet. In this condition, instilling the values of religious moderation is a challenge for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, especially in ensuring that students have a balanced, inclusive, and tolerant understanding of religion.

Islamic Religious Education teachers have a strategic role in shaping students' character, not only in academic aspects, but also in instilling moderate religious attitudes. However, the learning process still faces challenges, such as the diversity of students' different understandings, the influence of digital information that is not always in line with the principle of religious moderation, and the need for more innovative and relevant learning methods to students' lives.

To overcome these challenges, Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan have implemented various learning innovations, such as the use of technology, interactive discussions, and experience-based approaches. These efforts aim to ensure that students not only understand the concept of religious moderation in theory, but are also able to apply it in everyday life. However, the implementation of this innovation still faces obstacles, such as limited student understanding of the concept of moderation and the need for more flexible

strategies in teaching these values. The importance of religious moderation in the context of education is not only to prevent social conflict, but also to build a generation that has a balanced and inclusive understanding. Because religious moderation does not mean mixing up the truth or eliminating identity. Being rational does not mean deviating from the truth, but rather maintaining clear thinking in dealing with various problems, diversity, and the legitimacy of differences.

With religious moderation, we are more open to recognizing that outside our group, there are brothers and sisters who also have the same rights. (Arikarani, 2024). Because we are a sovereign society within a national framework, every individual has different beliefs, which we should respect and acknowledge. Therefore, we must always be moderate and continue to uphold religious values. Therefore, educational institutions, including SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan, must be the driving force in instilling these values. By implementing creative learning innovations, such as project-based learning, technology integration, or experience-based approaches, Islamic Religious Education teachers can play an important role in instilling the values of moderation effectively. With this, the researcher is interested in examining "Learning Innovations of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Instilling the Values of Religious Moderation at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan".

## **2. Method**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, to explore the learning innovations of Islamic Religious Education teachers in instilling the value of religious moderation at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan. Qualitative research is a research method that does not rely on statistical analysis or numerical calculations, but aims to understand phenomena in depth in their original context (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Data were collected through observation, documentation and in-depth interviews. Hereby data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity test using triangulation.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### ***Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Learning Innovation in Religion at Muhammadiyah 07 Middle School Medan***

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play an important role in shaping the character of students, not only in terms of academics, but also in instilling the values of religious moderation. Religious moderation in Islamic education aims to build a balanced, tolerant religious attitude, and respect for differences in community life. To achieve this goal, Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan implement various learning innovations to improve the effectiveness of material delivery and attract students' interest in learning. Thus, the role of teachers is not only limited to teaching religious knowledge, but also shaping the character of students so that they have an inclusive and moderate understanding of religion.

Based on the results of interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan, it is known that they implement creative and effective learning innovations by utilizing information and communication technology. The teacher stated:

*"Teachers implement creative and effective learning innovations by utilizing information and communication technology. Through this approach, students are invited to understand and practice the values of religious moderation, such as compassion, loving each other, respecting each other, and helping each other in goodness."*

This approach helps students not only understand the theory, but also practice these values in everyday life. With this learning innovation, it is hoped that students can have a more moderate understanding of religion and be able to apply balanced religious principles.

The school has the main goal of forming students who have faith and devotion to God Almighty. and are able to apply religious teachings in everyday life. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers are not only tasked with delivering lesson materials in class, but also guiding students through various activities that support deeper and more applicable religious learning. In an effort to instill the values of religious moderation, Islamic Religious Education teachers apply various strategies that support the understanding and practice of Islamic teachings in a more enjoyable and relevant way for students. One approach used is to build motivation so that students are more enthusiastic in learning and to get them used to doing good deeds in their daily lives. In addition, teachers also play an active role in establishing communication with students, not only in academic aspects, but also in guiding them in dealing with various social situations related to diversity and tolerance. In addition, innovations in learning continue to be developed so that students can more easily understand and internalize the concept of religious moderation. The way Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan integrate the values of religious moderation into Basic Competencies (KD) and Core Competencies (KI) and use learning methods that are in accordance with the curriculum. To improve the effectiveness of learning, various creative approaches are used, such

as the use of digital technology, interactive discussions, and educational games. With a more creative and interactive approach, students not only receive theory, but can also experience directly how religious values can be applied in everyday life.

Here the researcher can conclude that Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan do not only focus on delivering material, but also develop creative learning innovations to instill these values. Through an interactive and relevant approach to students' needs, religious learning becomes more interesting and applicable. Thus, this effort is expected to produce a generation that not only understands the teachings religion theoretically, but also practicing it in daily life with a tolerant, wise, and more moderate and inclusive attitude.

### ***Challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers in instilling the values of religious moderation at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan***

Islamic Religious Education teachers are also faced with the challenge of maintaining a balance between the application of normative religious rules and providing space for students to think critically and have open dialogue. In this context, a dogmatic approach without room for discussion can make students feel limited, while an approach that is too loose can obscure the religious values that are intended to be instilled. Therefore, a strategy is needed that can bridge students' understanding of religious teachings in a more inclusive and applicable way.

Based on the results of an interview with the Islamic Religious Education teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan, Mrs. Mahanisah, S.Ag., differences in background and environmental influences are challenges in teaching the values of religious moderation. Many students already have their own views on religion, either obtained from family or social media. This requires teachers to have flexible and creative strategies so that the message of religious moderation can be well received by all students.

The diversity of students' backgrounds who come with different perspectives of understanding religion and culture creates its own dynamics in the learning process. These differences not only include the way students think about religious teachings, but also how they understand the social values that develop in their respective environments. This requires teachers to have an approach that not only focuses on conveying religious theory, but also connecting it to the realities of everyday life to make it more relevant and easily accepted by students. One strategy implemented is to create a more interactive learning atmosphere, such as holding casual discussions that allow students to share their perspectives. Teachers also play a role in guiding students to sort out the information they obtain from various sources so that it remains in line with moderate and tolerant Islamic values. With a more open and communicative approach, students can more easily understand and apply religious values in their lives.

In addition to discussions, teachers also act as facilitators in guiding students to sort out the information they obtain from various sources. By equipping students with digital literacy skills and a strong understanding of moderate Islamic teachings, they can be more selective in filtering information and avoiding misinterpretation of religious teachings. Teachers can also use a case study-based approach, where students are invited to analyze various events or social issues related to Islamic values. This approach not only broadens students' horizons but also trains them to think critically and take a wiser stance in dealing with differences.

However, in implementing this strategy, PAI teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan need adequate support. In an interview, Mrs. Mahanisa, S.Ag., stated that this support can be in the form of increasing competence, educational programs and exclusive learning activities that respect differences between interfaith dialogue encouragement.

With this support, it is hoped that teachers can be more effective in instilling the values of religious moderation in students, so that they grow into individuals who have a solid understanding of religion, but remain open and tolerant of differences. In addition, a conducive school environment and the involvement of various parties, such as parents and the community, are also important factors in supporting the successful implementation of this strategy. With this, the researcher concludes that the instillation of religious moderation values at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan is greatly influenced by flexible, interactive, and relevant learning strategies for students' lives.

### ***The Values of Religious Moderation in Accordance with Islamic Religious Education in Middle Schools Muhammadiyah 07 Medan***

The values of religious moderation in accordance with Islamic Religious Education at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan include a balance between strong beliefs and a tolerant attitude towards differences. These values include tawasuth (middle/non-extreme attitude), tasamuh (tolerance towards differences), tawazun (balance between faith, worship, and muamalah), and i'tidal (being fair in religion). In an interview with Mrs. Mahanisah, S.Ag., she explained that integrating these values into teaching materials is done by appreciating learning methods that involve interesting media, so that students are more enthusiastic in understanding the material.

The use of innovative methods, such as group discussions, the use of technology in learning, and an experience-based approach, are some of the strategies implemented to strengthen students' understanding of the concept of religious moderation. In addition, teachers also play a role in providing real examples through daily attitudes and actions, such as respecting differences of opinion, teaching the importance of deliberation, and getting students used to being fair in assessing a problem.

Because, students' responses to the application of religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education learning can be seen from their attitudes of tolerance, curiosity, and motivation, there are differences in understanding between one and another. For example, in this school, Muhammadiyah understanding is taught, while there are students who previously studied at Al-Washliyah, so this understanding needs to be aligned. Moreover, in today's digital era, many students get information more often from the internet, which sometimes causes differences in understanding.

For this reason, the learning approach applied must be able to bridge the differences in understanding so that students have a balanced view in accordance with the values of religious moderation. One way to do this is by instilling a critical attitude towards the various sources of information they obtain, both from the surrounding environment and from digital media. In addition, teachers also play a role in providing a comprehensive understanding of inclusive Islamic teachings, so that students can see that religious moderation is part of the essence of Islamic Religious Education.

Therefore, the researcher concluded that the values of religious moderation are in line with Islamic Religious Education at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan, because they are implemented through innovative learning methods that balance belief with tolerance. Teachers play a role in guiding students to have an inclusive understanding and be able to respond to differences, so that religious moderation becomes an integral part of education at this school.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Learning innovations implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 07 Medan play an important role in instilling the values of religious moderation with a creative and interactive approach. This strategy not only deepens students' insight into moderate Islamic teachings, but also forms an inclusive and tolerant attitude in everyday life. The main challenges in its implementation are the differences in students' backgrounds and the influence of the environment and social media that shape their initial understanding of religion. Therefore, teachers must apply flexible and relevant methods, such as the use of technology, interactive discussions, and experiential learning, so that the message of religious moderation can be well received. The success of this strategy also depends heavily on the support of schools, parents, and the community in creating a conducive learning environment. With the right approach, Islamic Religious Education is not only a means of transferring knowledge, but also forms the character of students so that they have a balanced understanding of religion between strong beliefs and an open attitude towards diversity.

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