



Implementation of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics in Fostering Religious Moderation: A Multisite Vocational School Study

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening religious moderation in vocational high schools (SMK) is frequently constrained by dense vocational coursework and limited hours for Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This study analyzes how religious moderation values are operationalized through PAI and Ethics in a vocational school environment. Employing a multisite qualitative design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 key informants (2 school principals, 4 PAI teachers, 2 extracurricular advisors, and 4 student council/Rohis leaders) across SMK Syahida and SMK Al-Munawaroh in Tasikmalaya, complemented by field observations and institutional document analysis. Data were processed using cross-site thematic analysis. The findings reveal that moderation values are articulated through the alignment of PAI intracurricular instruction with cocurricular and religious extracurricular activities, supported by school leadership and an inclusive social environment. This mechanism was observed to support the continuity of moral messaging and students' daily habits without increasing the formal curriculum load. This study offers a contextual contribution regarding ecosystem-based character education in regional vocational schools. Overall, strengthening religious moderation in vocational schools is observed to manifest effectively when PAI is holistically integrated into student social spaces.

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Introduction

The systematic and continuous implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Ethics serves as a strategic imperative for internalizing values of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) within the highly pluralistic educational landscape of Indonesia (Haris et al., 2024; Muzakki & Nurdin, 2022; Pedersen, 2016; Tilaar, 2004). Within formal secondary schooling structures, PAI and Ethics are not merely designed to transmit normative theological doctrines; rather, they function as foundational instruments for cultivating inclusive character, social responsibility, and balanced moral behavior among secondary school students. For vocational secondary schools (SMK), these instructional

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goals are directly anchored in Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology regulations (*Permendikbudristek*) governing national curriculum standards and character building frameworks—most notably the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*—alongside the National Guidelines for Religious Moderation (*Panduan Nasional Moderasi Beragama*) established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Alamsyah et al., 2024; Jamaludin, 2022; Kementerian Agama RI, 2019; Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 22 Tahun 2020 Tentang Rencana Strategis Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Tahun 2020-2024, 2020; Verkuyten & Kollar, 2021). Together, these regulatory frameworks mandate the systemic integration of core moderation indicators—specifically national commitment (*komitmen kebangsaan*), tolerance (*tashamuh*), non-violence (*anti-kekerasan*), and accommodation of local culture—into formal classroom instruction and broader institutional cultures. Despite the presence of these normative and regulatory frameworks, secondary education institutions in contemporary Indonesia face severe ideological vulnerabilities and acute behavioral challenges. Empirical assessments continue to reveal an alarming susceptibility among youth to intolerant discourses and radical ideologies. As highlighted by the Setara Institute in a seminal study conducted by [Achmad et al., 2023], high school students demonstrate significant exposure and vulnerability to exclusive religious understandings (Achmad et al., 2023; Arifinsyah et al., 2020; Ghosh et al., 2017). This ideological vulnerability is further exacerbated by the persistence of physical, verbal, and psychological violence within school environments (Aryawati et al., 2024; Campelo et al., 2018; Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, 2023). Consequently, the academic urgency of this study lies in moving decisively beyond abstract, normative, and rhetorical declarations of moderation. It addresses a critical scholarly imperative: conducting a rigorous empirical investigation into how moderate religious values are factually operationalized, pedagogically translated, and sustainably internalized within real-world vocational educational practices.

Addressing these academic and societal challenges requires empirical proof within specific, highly differentiated educational environments, particularly vocational secondary schools (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan / SMK*). Unlike general senior high schools (*Sekolah Menengah Atas / SMA*) that prioritize comprehensive academic theory, vocational education is structuralized around technical competencies, practical skill acquisition, and rapid workforce readiness. This unique orientation creates a distinct institutional ethos where value institutionalization must compete directly with intensive industry-driven curricula, practical workshops, and internship demands. Within this pedagogical landscape, the Tasikmalaya region in West Java provides a critical local context to examine the efficacy of moderate religious pedagogy. Historically recognized as an intense religious hub with deep-rooted Islamic traditions and a dense concentration of educational institutions, Tasikmalaya presents a complex environment for examining how formal moderation policies interface with localized socio-religious norms. This research focuses on SMK Syahida Tasikmalaya and SMK Al-Munawaroh Tasikmalaya as the primary objects of empirical study. The units of analysis comprise the specific instructional forms, daily pedagogical processes, multi-actor interaction dynamics, and institutional implications of PAI and Ethics learning in shaping student attitudes. By investigating these two distinct vocational institutions, the study delineates how the design, delivery, and evaluation of moderation-infused PAI curricula foster inclusive, equitable, and balanced student identities within skill-oriented training environments (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024).

Existing scholarly consensus firmly establishes that the cultivation of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) within educational ecosystems is not an isolated pedagogical

act, but rather a multi-path process requiring structural alignment across curricular design, instructional execution, educator behavior, and school culture (R. Mulyana, 2023; Suryana & Hilmi, 2023). Literature spanning general secondary education, vocational schools, and Islamic higher education converges on the premise that moderate attitudes are successfully fostered through explicit value embedding, visionary administrative leadership, exemplary teacher conduct, and structured extracurricular programming (Hilmi et al., 2023; Nasrullah et al., 2023). Methodologically, scholars have examined these dynamics through diverse empirical lenses. Action research designs, such as the five-stage PEACE framework (Promotion, Elaboration, Actualization, Communication, and Evaluation) developed by Saepudin et al. (2023), demonstrate significant quantitative efficacy in enhancing secondary students' tolerance, mutual respect, and explicit rejection of fanaticism. Similarly, in qualitative investigations of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and Islamic higher education institutions, Sagirah et al. (2024) and **Nasir & Rijal (2021)** revealed that institutionalizing moderation depends heavily on top-down structural policies set by school leaders, selective teacher recruitment, eclectic curriculum modeling, and strong ideological alignment. Collectively, these foundational studies confirm that successful value internalization is functionally dependent on the seamless integration between substantive PAI instructional content and the broader organizational ecosystem supporting it (M. Mulyana et al., 2023).

Despite this broad thematic consensus, existing literature exhibits significant analytical fragmentation, theoretical divergence, and critical conceptual limitations regarding implementation dynamics in the field. Scholars focusing on Islamic higher education and traditional *pesantren* systems predominantly argue that structural governance, top-down policy enforcement, and formal administrative mandates serve as the primary drivers of religious moderation (**Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Sagirah et al., 2024**). In contrast, literature focused on secondary and vocational schools tends to frame moderation almost exclusively as an isolated outcome of classroom pedagogical techniques, individual teacher role modeling, or localized extracurricular activities (Albana, 2023; Saepudin et al., 2023). Furthermore, while several conceptual analyses critically evaluate the normative alignment of PAI textbooks and policy guidelines with moderate values (Masturin, 2023), they frequently omit the practical friction, policy miscommunications, and structural constraints that occur during actual classroom execution. Consequently, current research leaves unresolved how macro-level institutional policies interact with micro-level pedagogical practices, particularly in vocational education settings where character building must continuously adapt to time-intensive, industry-focused training priorities.

These theoretical and empirical divergences highlight three fundamental analytical gaps in current educational literature. First, there is a persistent neglect of non-linear actor dynamics—specifically regarding how simultaneous interactions between school principals, PAI educators, student councils (*OSIS*), and spiritual extracurricular organizations (*Rohis*) operate during real-time policy execution [Nasrullah et al., 2023]. Existing studies often analyze these actors in isolation, failing to capture how their collective dispositions either facilitate or obstruct value transmission. Second, prior research relies overwhelmingly on single-site case studies or uniform institutional evaluations, leaving a major blind spot in understanding how structural variations between different educational units shape value internalization under differing resource and governance conditions. Third, significant operational inconsistencies remain unexamined, such as uneven disciplinary standards, limited access to specialized teacher training on moderation pedagogy, and severe resource disparities across schools. As a result, existing literature fails to provide a comprehensive framework explaining how

policy communication, resource allocation, actor dispositions, and bureaucratic structures collectively transform top-down moderation mandates into a cohesive, inviting, and sustainable institutional culture.

This study directly addresses these analytical limitations by advancing beyond single-site baseline inquiries (Hilmi et al., 2023; Suryana & Hilmi, 2023) to uncover the distinct, cross-site institutional mechanisms that govern the operationalization of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) across vocational school environments. Leveraging George C. Edward III's (1980) public policy implementation framework—which systematically analyzes policy communication, resource allocation, actor dispositions, and bureaucratic structures—this research posits a central cross-site comparative proposition: the successful internalization of religious moderation values in vocational secondary schools is fundamentally contingent upon whether institutional governance operates through an *actor-driven pattern*, characterized by proactive teacher leadership, informal networking, and high student initiative (as observed in SMK Syahida), or a *regulation-oriented pattern*, characterized by formalized administrative mandates, strict hierarchical compliance, and structural policy enforcement (as observed in SMK Al-Munawaroh). By critically contrasting how these two distinct institutional dynamics navigate systemic operational constraints—such as limited specialized training and resource disparities—this study moves past descriptive value verification to explain the exact organizational conditions and actor interactions under which moderation mandates are translated into daily educational practice.

Accordingly, this study aims to systematically analyze and compare the implementation forms, pedagogical processes, systemic dynamics, and institutional outcomes of PAI and Ethics in fostering student religious moderation across vocational settings (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). To achieve this overarching objective, the inquiry is driven by two clearly structured research questions: (1) *Main Research Question*: How is the implementation of PAI and Ethics policies systematically communicated, resourced, and operationalized through actor dispositions and bureaucratic structures to foster religious moderation in vocational secondary schools? and (2) *Comparative Sub-Question*: In what ways do similarities and differences in institutional implementation factors—specifically contrasting the actor-driven pattern of SMK Syahida against the regulation-oriented pattern of SMK Al-Munawaroh—shape the operational dynamics and sustainability of religious moderation practices? Employing a qualitative multisite design combined with interactive qualitative data analysis techniques (Miles et al., 2018), this research generates robust empirical evidence on how moderation values are institutionalized across classroom learning, extracurricular activities, and everyday school culture. Scientifically, this study contributes to Islamic education and policy implementation literature by providing empirical proof of cross-site organizational mechanisms in vocational secondary education, while delivering actionable insights for educational policymakers and school administrators to optimize value-institutionalization frameworks.

To address these empirical and comparative inquiries in a clear and logical sequence, this article is organized into four interconnected analytical sections. Following this introduction, the research methodology section outlines the qualitative multisite research design, site selection rationale, data collection procedures involving key actors across both vocational institutions, and the interactive data analysis framework (Miles et al., 2018). The subsequent findings and discussion section applies George C. Edward III's (1980) public policy implementation model to examine how communication, resource allocation, actor dispositions, and bureaucratic structures intersect within the vocational context. This section is organized directly around the research questions, contrasting the

actor-driven dynamics at SMK Syahida with the regulation-oriented pattern at SMK Al-Munawaroh across classroom instruction, extracurricular programming, and school culture. Finally, the concluding section synthesizes the core empirical findings, outlines key theoretical contributions to the policy implementation literature in Islamic secondary education, discusses study limitations, and offers practical recommendations for educational administrators and curriculum developers.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a multisite design across two vocational secondary schools in Tasikmalaya Regency: SMK Syahida and SMK Al-Munawaroh (Jenkins et al., 2018). The multisite design was selected not for statistical generalization, but to compare implementation processes, identify operational similarities and contextual variations, and analyze enabling and constraining factors across distinct vocational educational environments (Deytieux et al., 2016). This study treats each school as a distinct analytical site to evaluate how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Ethics internalize values of religious moderation. The analytical framework is informed by Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology regulations on curriculum and character building (*Profil Pelajar Pancasila*), the National Guidelines for Religious Moderation Kementerian Agama RI (2019), and Edward III (1980) public policy implementation theory. Fieldwork was conducted from April 20 to June 29, 2025.

Table 1. Distribution of Research Informants Across School Sites

The Role of the Informant	SMK Syahida	SMK Munawaroh	Al-	Total Informants
Principal	1	1		2
Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs	1	1		2
Vice Principal for Student Affairs / Religious Supervisor	1	1		2
PAI and Ethics Teachers	1	1		2
Student Council President (OSIS)	1	1		2
Scout Leader	1	1		2
Rohis Chairperson	1	1		2
Total	7	7		14

Table 2. Overview of Institutional Document Analysis

Document Type	Site	Quantity	Document Collection & Analysis Period	Selection Criteria	Analytical Function
Syllabus & Lesson Plans (RPP/MA) for PAI and Ethics	Both sites	2	17–19 June 2025	Valid official learning documents	Examining the integration of religious moderation content within formal instructional design
Annual Institutional Work Programs	Both sites	2	20–22 June 2025	Official institutional work program documents	Identifying the strategic direction of student character and moderation policies/programs
Records & Activity Reports of Religious Programs	Both sites	2	23–25 June 2025	Official notes, photos, and activity completion reports	Confirming the continuous implementation and practical forms of student religious activities
School Profile & Annual Performance Report	Both sites	2	26–29 June 2025	Official institutional performance and	Providing foundational contextual data and institutional history of each school site

The unit of analysis is the institutional implementation of PAI and Ethics in fostering religious moderation within vocational schools. Primary informants comprised 14 individuals selected via purposive sampling, evenly distributed with seven informants per school site. Informants were selected based on institutional roles to balance managerial policy perspectives with micro-level implementation practices. At each site, the structure included the Principal for policy oversight; the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs for instructional design; the Vice Principal for Student Affairs / Religious Supervisor for co-curricular moderation programs; the PAI and Ethics Teacher for classroom teaching; and student leaders—the Student Council (OSIS) President, Scout Leader, and Rohis Chairperson—for student operational experiences. Additionally, eight official institutional documents were analyzed to contextualize field data.

Data were collected between April 20 and June 29, 2025, using semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted on-site at school facilities (principals' offices, staff rooms, activity centers) using a semi-structured guide with seven core open-ended questions addressing implementation strategies, moderation practices, and institutional challenges. Interviews were conducted in oral Indonesian, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. Field interviews involved iterative sessions per informant between April 20 and June 16, 2025; as a methodological limitation, exact per-session durations were not recorded, though sessions continued until theoretical data saturation was achieved. Non-participant observations occurred from April 23 to June 29, 2025, across formal PAI classrooms and outdoor communal spaces (school mosques, assembly grounds) during routine activities (Rohis meetings, Scout sessions, daily interactions). Document analysis was conducted from June 17 to June 29, 2025, examining PAI syllabi, lesson plans, annual work programs, activity logs, and school performance reports.

Data analysis was conducted manually by the primary researcher without qualitative analysis software (CAQDAS), ensuring an immersive interpretation of field evidence. The process followed an interactive qualitative model comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2018). Data reduction began with verbatim transcription and systematic alphanumeric coding to establish an audit trail across all 14 informants, observation sessions, and documents (detailed in Supplementary Appendix 1). To mitigate single-coder bias, negative case analysis was applied alongside member-checking clarification sessions. Analysis proceeded in two sequential phases: single-site analysis mapping internal dynamics at each school, followed by cross-site comparative analysis identifying operational similarities and variations. The resulting thematic patterns were evaluated using George C. Edward III's (1980) framework—analyzing communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure.

Methodological rigor was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria (Denzin & Lincoln, 2023). Data credibility was enforced via source and method triangulation alongside member checking. Member checking was conducted directly after transcription (June 10–20, 2025), where all 14 informants reviewed transcript accuracy and preliminary interpretive summaries; minor wording clarifications were incorporated, while no fundamental factual disagreements occurred. Positioned as a non-participant observer without prior institutional affiliation, the researcher gained field access through official administrative permissions. To manage reactivity and interpretive bias during observations, the researcher maintained a non-intrusive presence, engaged in reflexive field journaling, and conducted peer debriefing.

Transferability is ensured through thick contextual descriptions of both schools, while dependability and confirmability are maintained through a transparent audit trail.

This study adhered to qualitative research ethics involving human participants across both school sites. Formal access was secured through institutional research recommendation from Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim (UHC) Mojokerto, alongside official research authorization from the principals of SMK Syahida and SMK Al-Munawaroh. All 14 participants received verbal and written briefings regarding the research objectives and voluntarily provided written informed consent prior to interviews and observations. To safeguard confidentiality, participant identities were anonymized using standardized alphanumeric codes in the manuscript (e.g., [W-SY-GPAI], [W-AM-KS]); complete participant identification, roles, and unredacted interview logs are maintained in a secure repository and provided in Supplementary Appendix 2 for editorial verification. Participation was entirely voluntary, with explicit rights to withdraw at any stage without prejudice. In accordance with institutional research policies for social science studies in vocational schools, formal institutional ethics committee review was waived based on the non-invasive nature of the data collection procedures and low-risk participant engagement.

Results and Discussion

Results

This section presents empirical findings regarding the institutional implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Ethics in fostering religious moderation across two vocational secondary schools in Tasikmalaya Regency: SMK Syahida and SMK Al-Munawaroh. Serving as an analytical roadmap, the findings are organized into three sequential thematic blocks derived from iterative single-site analyses and cross-site comparative evaluations across 14 key informants and eight institutional documents. The first block details field-level implementation practices, encompassing formal curricular integration, instructional strategies, and co-curricular religious programs. The second block outlines observed student-level outcomes, specifically the cultivation of moderate socio-religious attitudes, interfaith tolerance, and inclusive institutional behaviors. The third block examines operational enabling and constraining factors structured through George C. Edward III's policy implementation dimensions: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Throughout these thematic blocks, site-specific evidence is cross-analyzed to delineate operational convergence and contextual variations between the two institutional settings, maintaining a descriptive empirical focus while reserving extended theoretical interpretations for the subsequent Discussion section.

Before presenting the empirical findings, Table 3 defines the alphanumeric coding structure used to establish auditability across informants, observation logs, and institutional documents.

Table 3. Code Legend and Traceability Identifier Matrix

Prefix Type	Identifier / Code Format	Description & Operational Scope
Data Type	W (Wawancara/Interview), O (Observation Log), D (Document Analysis)	Primary empirical data collection technique used.
Site Identifier	SY (SMK Syahida), AM (SMK Al-Munawaroh)	Institutional research location in Tasikmalaya Regency.

Informant Role	KS (Principal), WK (Vice Principal/Curriculum), WS (Vice Principal/Student Affairs), GPAI (PAI Teacher), OSIS (Student Council President), PRM (Scout Leader), RHS (Rohis Leader)	Specific institutional role of the participant (\$n=14\$, 7 per site).
Sequence Code	Numeric suffix (e.g., -01, -02) or date string (e.g., [D-SY-RPP-170625])	Specific interview sequence or exact document analysis date.

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics Values

Empirical evidence demonstrates that the implementation of PAI and Ethics at both vocational schools is operationalized beyond cognitive compliance, structured through document-based planning, integrated learning domains, and institutional evaluation mechanisms.

Planning: Alignment of Policy and Habituation

Planning at both sites establishes the foundation for embedding moderation values—such as tolerance (*tasamuh*) and balance (*tawasuth*)—into formal instructional design. At SMK Syahida, curricular planning is driven by PAI teachers aligned with school academic guidelines. Document analysis of the PAI lesson plans dated June 17, 2025 ([D-SY-RPP-170625]) confirms explicit learning objectives targeting religious harmony. As reported by the PAI teacher, planning extends to daily habituation:

"We systematically align curriculum targets with daily student routines, assigning homeroom teachers to monitor morning religious observances." (Interview with PAI Teacher at SMK Syahida, June 18, 2025)

Conversely, participant accounts at SMK Al-Munawaroh reveal a culture-based, collaborative planning model. Annual work meeting records dated June 20, 2025 ([D-AM-PK-200625]) document shared agreements between administrators, PAI faculty, and student representatives to fund inclusive social programs in surrounding communities.

Implementation: Intracurricular, Co-Curricular, and Extracurricular Domains

Field data across both sites show that operationalization occurs across three distinct educational domains:

1. **Intracurricular Instruction:** Classroom practice moves beyond dogmatic legalism to contextualize diversity. Direct field observation at SMK Syahida ([O-SY-01]) recorded PAI teachers utilizing small-group discussions analyzing historical interfaith agreements under the Prophet Muhammad. At SMK Al-Munawaroh, classroom observation ([O-AM-01]) showed an emphasis on social ethics, where teachers framed religious obligations around civic responsibility.
2. **Co-Curricular Projects:** Documented evidence at SMK Syahida ([D-SY-RPP-170625]) includes student project modules assessing social empathy. At SMK Al-Munawaroh, co-curricular structures focus on classical text literacy coupled with national dialogue sessions, as reported by the PAI teacher ([W-AM-GPAI-01]).
3. **Extracurricular Habituation:** Both institutions leverage student organizations—Islamic Spirituality (Rohis), Student Council (OSIS), and Scouts—for practical habituation. Participant interviews at SMK Syahida highlight teacher modeling during Islamic holiday commemorations ([W-SY-WK-01]). At SMK Al-Munawaroh, extracurricular execution prioritizes cross-organizational social service ([W-AM-KS-01]; [O-AM-01]).

Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanisms

Evaluation mechanisms combine formal academic assessments with ongoing behavioral monitoring. At SMK Syahida, the evaluation framework incorporates cognitive tests alongside daily attitude observation sheets maintained by homeroom teachers ([D-SY-02-220625]). At SMK Al-Munawaroh, administrative records ([D-AM-02-250625])

confirm monthly coordination meetings between the Principal, PAI faculty, and student advisors to review student social dynamics and address potential interpersonal conflicts.

Cross-Site Synthesis and Operational Limitations

Table 4 synthesizes the comparative implementation stages across both institutional sites.

Table 4. Comparative Synthesis of PAI and Ethics Implementation Stages

Implementation Stage	SMK Syahida (Actor-Driven Pattern)	SMK Al-Munawaroh (Regulation-Oriented Pattern)	Primary Evidence Source
Planning	Teacher-led alignment of lesson plans with daily habituation mapping.	Collaborative annual stakeholder meetings formulating inclusive culture programs.	[D-SY-RPP-170625], [W-AM-KS-01], [D-AM-PK-200625]
Intracurricular	Group discussions on historical tolerance and case study analysis.	Applied social ethics and civic responsibility modules.	[O-SY-01], [W-AM-GPAI-01], [O-AM-01]
Co-Curricular	Social empathy project assignments and critical extremism analysis.	Textual religious literacy and structured national dialogue sessions.	[D-SY-RPP-170625], [W-AM-GPAI-01]
Extracurricular	Faculty mentorship in Rohis and OSIS holiday events.	Inter-organizational community service and mutual assistance.	[W-SY-WK-01], [W-AM-KS-01], [O-AM-01]
Evaluation	Combined cognitive testing and daily behavioral observation logs.	Monthly administrative leadership meetings reviewing student interaction logs.	[D-SY-02-220625], [D-AM-02-250625]
Operational Challenges	Allocated PAI class hours (3 hours/week); uneven non-PAI faculty integration.	Varied religious background of incoming junior high graduates.	[W-SY-GPAI-01], [W-AM-GPAI-01]

Cross-site comparison reveals structural similarities in institutional commitment, yet highlights divergence in operational approaches: SMK Syahida exhibits an *actor-driven pattern* reliant on faculty mentorship, whereas SMK Al-Munawaroh utilizes a *regulation-oriented pattern* rooted in institutional policy and social action.

However, participant reports indicate key operational limitations. PAI teachers at both sites ([W-SY-GPAI-01]; [W-AM-GPAI-01]) noted that the national curriculum allocation of three lesson hours per week restricts deep affective habituation, forcing reliance on extracurricular spaces to achieve moderation goals.

Implications of Islamic Religious Education Values and Ethics

Field data across both vocational schools indicate that the operationalization of PAI and Ethics yields observed and participant-reported manifestations of religious moderation. Rather than asserting direct linear causality, these findings illustrate how integrated institutional practices correspond with moderate student attitudes—specifically tolerance, peacebuilding through dialogue, and social responsibility.

Tolerance and Respect for Religious Differences

Participant accounts and observational data demonstrate that tolerance is actively practiced within daily school interactions. At SMK Syahida, PAI teachers incorporate historical examples of interfaith coexistence during instructional hours. As reported by the PAI teacher:

“We emphasize historical interfaith treaties to demonstrate that Islam inherently respects diversity, encouraging students to respect minor ritual variations within

their daily interactions." (Interview with PAI Teacher at SMK Syahida, June 18, 2025).

Field observations at SMK Syahida ([O-SY-02]) confirm this account, recording respectful student behavior during differences in daily worship practices (*furu'iyah*).

Conversely, at SMK Al-Munawaroh, respect for differences is reinforced through institutional regulations and case study analyses. Document analysis of the school code of conduct ([D-AM-KS-01-150625]) highlights explicit anti-discrimination policies. PAI teachers operationalize these policies by presenting real-world social scenarios for student analysis ([W-AM-GPAI-02]).

Peacebuilding, Open Dialogue, and Conflict Resolution

Habits of dialogue and non-violent dispute resolution are embedded within co-curricular and extracurricular structures. At SMK Syahida, student leaders utilize joint organizational forums (Rohis and OSIS) to resolve minor peer friction. As described by the student council leadership:

"When disputes arise between student groups, we utilize the Rohis-OSIS dialogue forum to mediate and build consensus before issues escalate." (Interview with Student Council President at SMK Syahida, June 19, 2025).

Documentary records of student activities ([D-SY-LKG-01-200625]) substantiate the execution of joint national discussions aimed at cultivating open dialogue.

At SMK Al-Munawaroh, dialogue is integrated into routine religious assemblies and joint prayer sessions ([O-AM-02]). As articulated by the school administration:

"Our post-prayer deliberation sessions provide a structured space for students to discuss shared concerns peacefully without resorting to physical confrontation." (Interview with Principal at SMK Al-Munawaroh, June 21, 2025).

Regarding institutional safety, an examination of the annual administrative report ([D-AM-LT-01-240625]) indicates an absence of recorded violent incidents or open inter-group conflicts during the reporting period. Notably, while this document reflects zero official incident filings within its annual scope, it serves as an indicator of recorded administrative compliance rather than absolute proof that no unrecorded interpersonal friction occurred.

Social Care and Moderation in Religious Practice

The integration of PAI values extends into outward social action, balancing ritual practices with community service. Participant interviews at SMK Syahida confirm joint fundraising and social relief distributions coordinated by Rohis, OSIS, and Scout members ([D-SY-LKG-02-220625]). As stated by the extracurricular advisor:

"Engaging students in collaborative relief efforts helps shift their focus from exclusive dogmatism toward tangible social empathy." (Interview with Rohis Advisor at SMK Syahida, June 19, 2025).

At SMK Al-Munawaroh, social care is operationalized through structured community service (*gotong royong*) integrated with Islamic holiday commemorations ([O-AM-03]; [D-AM-PK-02-210625]). As reported by the student leadership:

"Participating in neighborhood service projects allows us to apply religious teachings directly by helping local residents regardless of their background." (Interview with Student Council President at SMK Al-Munawaroh, June 22, 2025).

Cross-Site Synthesis of Observed and Reported Implications

Table 5 synthesizes the observed and reported implications across both institutional settings.

Table 5. Comparative Synthesis of Observed and Reported Implications of PAI Implementation

Finding Theme	SMK Syahida (Actor-Driven Pattern)	SMK Al-Munawaroh (Regulation-Oriented Pattern)	Primary Evidence	Traceable
Tolerance & Mutual Respect	Teacher modeling of historical harmony; observed respect for ritual variations (<i>furu'iyah</i>).	Formal anti-discrimination policies; case-study analysis of social scenarios in lesson plans.	[W-SY-GPAI-02], [O-SY-02], [D-AM-KS-01-150625], [D-AM-RPP-02-180625]	
Peacebuilding & Dialogue	Peer mediation via Rohis-OSIS forums; joint student national discussion events.	Structured deliberation following joint prayers; leadership emphasis on non-violent resolution.	[W-SY-OSIS-01], [D-SY-LKG-01-200625], [O-AM-02], [W-AM-KS-02], [D-AM-LT-01-240625]	
Social Responsibility	Multi-organization student fundraising; collaborative community relief efforts.	Neighborhood mutual assistance (<i>gotong royong</i>) tied to Islamic holiday schedules.	[W-SY-ROHIS-01], [W-SY-PROHIS-01], [D-SY-LKG-02-220625], [O-AM-03], [D-AM-PK-02-210625]	

Synthesis across sites demonstrates convergent outcomes in strengthening tolerance, peaceful dialogue, and social care. However, institutional mechanisms differ: SMK Syahida relies predominantly on *actor-driven leadership* and peer-to-peer student dialogue, whereas SMK Al-Munawaroh relies on *regulation-oriented structures* and formal community engagement. Furthermore, while these findings document strong institutional alignment, empirical data remain limited regarding non-compliant student subgroups or long-term behavioral persistence outside the school environment.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Implementation

Field evidence reveals that the operationalization of PAI and Ethics policies at both vocational schools is conditioned by internal institutional dynamics and external environmental factors. To examine these operational conditions systematically, findings are structured around George C. Edward III's policy implementation framework: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure.

Communication: Clarity and Consistency of Institutional Mandates

Transmission of moderation policies differs significantly between the two sites. At SMK Syahida, policy transmission relies heavily on direct verbal instruction and ongoing informal coordination between leadership and religious instructors ([W-SY-KS-01]). As explained by the school leadership:

"We communicate moderation targets through routine Monday briefings and direct coordination with PAI teachers, ensuring that character goals are understood without complex administrative paperwork." (Interview with Principal at SMK Syahida, June 18, 2025).

Conversely, SMK Al-Munawaroh employs a formal, document-driven communication strategy. Policy directives prohibiting discrimination and mandating persuasive discipline are explicitly articulated in written codes of conduct ([D-AM-PK-01-150625]) and disseminated across all faculty departments during semester planning assemblies ([W-AM-KS-01]).

Resources: Allocation of Time, Personnel, and Facilities

Resource constraints represent a major limiting factor across both institutional sites. PAI faculty at both SMK Syahida and SMK Al-Munawaroh reported that the national vocational curriculum restricts PAI to three instructional hours per week ([W-SY-GPAI-01]; [W-AM-GPAI-01]). As emphasized by a PAI instructor:

“Three class hours per week force us to focus heavily on cognitive syllabus coverage, leaving insufficient instructional time to nurture deep behavioral habituation within classroom boundaries.” (Interview with PAI Teacher at SMK Al-Munawaroh, June 21, 2025).

Regarding human resources, SMK Syahida demonstrates strong peer modeling through dedicated Rohis advisors ([W-SY-PROHIS-01]), whereas non-PAI faculty engagement remains uneven at both sites. Furthermore, while SMK Al-Munawaroh leverages boarding-school (*pesantren*) infrastructural facilities to support routine prayer and dialogue assemblies ([O-AM-01]), written documentation regarding systematic, ongoing financial partnerships with external community bodies was not explicitly identified in either school's archives.

Dispositions: Actor Commitment and Pedagogical Initiatives

Staff attitudes and execution commitments shape local implementation success. At SMK Syahida, an *actor-driven pattern* predominates, where PAI teachers voluntarily initiate interactive tolerance modules and mentor student organization leaders beyond scheduled work hours ([W-SY-GPAI-01]; [W-SY-WK-01]). At SMK Al-Munawaroh, administrative disposition is characterized by strict policy enforcement, where leaders mandate non-violent dispute resolution and cross-student service projects ([D-AM-PK-01-150625]). However, PAI teachers at SMK Al-Munawaroh identified incoming student diversity—specifically varying baseline religious literacy from feeder junior high schools—as an operational dispositional challenge ([W-AM-GPAI-01]).

Bureaucratic Structure: Standard Operating Procedures and Divisional Coordination

Bureaucratic arrangements dictate organizational execution. At SMK Syahida, inter-organizational collaboration between Rohis, OSIS, and Scout units operates through flexible, project-based coordination overseen by the Vice Principal of Student Affairs ([W-SY-WK-01]). At SMK Al-Munawaroh, execution is governed by formal institutionalized routines, including mandatory monthly leadership meetings to review student interaction logs and address potential friction ([D-AM-02-250625]).

Cross-Site Synthesis of Implementation Factors

Table 6 synthesizes the operational enabling and constraining factors categorized by Edward III's implementation dimensions.

Table 6. Synthesis of Supporting and Inhibiting Factors Across Edward III Dimensions

Edward III Dimension	SMK Syahida (Actor-Driven Pattern)	SMK Al-Munawaroh (Regulation-Oriented Pattern)	Primary Traceable Evidence
Communication	Direct verbal briefings and informal leadership-faculty coordination.	Formal written codes of conduct disseminated via semester planning assemblies.	[W-SY-KS-01], [D-AM-PK-01-150625], [W-AM-KS-01]
Resources	Constrained PAI class hours (3 hours/week); active student organization advisors.	Constrained PAI class hours (3 hours/week); utilization of <i>pesantren</i> facilities.	[W-SY-GPAI-01], [W-AM-GPAI-01], [O-AM-01]
Disposition	High teacher initiative in voluntary mentorship and custom instructional design.	Executive mandate enforcing anti-violence culture; managing diverse incoming student backgrounds.	[W-SY-GPAI-01], [W-SY-WK-01], [D-AM-PK-01-150625], [W-AM-GPAI-01]
Bureaucratic Structure	Project-based inter-club student collaboration under student affairs supervision.	Formalized monthly coordination meetings and institutionalized prayer/assembly routines.	[W-SY-WK-01], [D-AM-02-250625]

In summary, the empirical findings across both vocational secondary schools demonstrate that embedding religious moderation through PAI and Ethics requires alignment across institutional planning, integrated educational domains, and structured support mechanisms. While both institutions achieve convergent goals in fostering tolerance, peaceful dialogue, and social care, their operational dynamics follow distinct institutional pathways: SMK Syahida operates through an *actor-driven pattern* grounded in teacher mentorship and informal student dialogue, whereas SMK Al-Munawaroh relies on a *regulation-oriented pattern* sustained by formal administrative mandates and structured communal routines. Nevertheless, both patterns face shared structural constraints, including limited national curriculum hours and reliance on digital environments outside school control. These descriptive empirical patterns provide the foundational evidence required to evaluate theoretical alignment and policy sustainability in the following Discussion section.

Discussion

The central empirical insight emerging from this study is that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Ethics values in vocational secondary schools operates effectively not through isolated doctrinal delivery, but through a continuous mechanism connecting classroom instructional articulation with school ecosystem habituation. While the descriptive results detailed how implementation occurs across planning, execution, and evaluation domains, this discussion theoretically clarifies these empirical patterns through the lens of policy implementation dynamics and institutional habituation. When normative values of tolerance and ethics are taught within formal PAI instruction and subsequently operationalized through student-led dialogue forums and social activities, students gain structured socio-institutional space to translate abstract ethical concepts into daily practices. This cross-site phenomenon demonstrates that successful value internalization depends strictly upon structural enabling conditions—specifically clear policy communication, supportive leadership dispositions, and sustained teacher mentorship. Consequently, strengthening religious moderation in vocational secondary education requires formal PAI curricula to be articulately integrated within the school's socio-religious environment.

Relevance of the Implementation of PAI Values and Ethics to Religious Moderation

The functional relevance of PAI values and ethics to religious moderation in vocational secondary education does not reside in treating moderation as an isolated cognitive topic. Rather, cross-site evidence from SMK Syahida and SMK Al-Munawaroh reveals that relevance is established when core tenets—specifically tolerance (*tasamuh*), social care (*ta'awun*), and non-violent conflict resolution—are systematically translated across three operational domains: classroom instruction, co-curricular/extracurricular engagement, and ecosystem habituation (R. Mulyana, 2023; Pajariantio et al., 2022). Rather than instilling values through rote textual memorization, both institutions provide structured social practices through which religious discourse is continuously contextualized, tested, and validated within daily interactions.

The Three-Tiered Mechanism of Value Internalization

The empirical data across both sites elucidate a coherent three-stage mechanism through which PAI instructions transform into living moderation practices:

- Instructional Articulation (Cognitive Domain): PAI instructors initiate critical pedagogical dialogues surrounding historical interfaith treaties and internal diversity within Islamic jurisprudence (*furu'iyah*). This stage equips students with cognitive religious literacy and theoretical frameworks of tolerance.

- Co-Curricular & Extracurricular Mobilization (Affective & Social Domain): Classroom discourse is translated into action through joint organizational structures, including the Islamic Youth Organization (*Rohis*), Student Executive Council (*OSIS*), and Scout movement (*Pramuka*). Students engage in peer-to-peer dialogue, joint conflict mediation, and community relief projects.
- Ecosystem Habituation (Behavioral Domain): Continuous execution of these activities establishes normalized behavioral patterns across the institutional environment, supported by institutional routines, leadership modeling, and administrative policies.

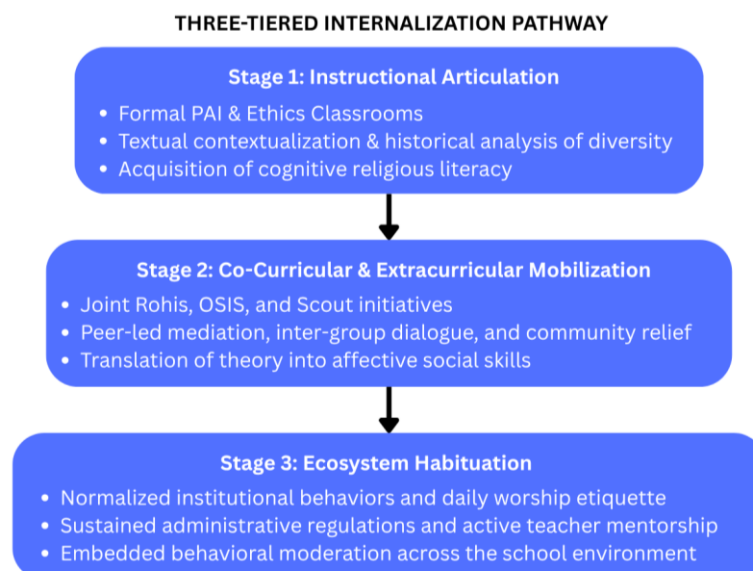


Figure 1. Theoretical framework and multi-tiered pathway of PAI and ethics value implementation: (a) Conceptual interaction between policy input parameters and theoretical implementation mechanisms based on Edward III's model and Habit Formation theory; (b) The three-tiered operational pathway translating cognitive instructional articulation into co-curricular mobilization and ecosystem habituation.

Source: Processed Field Data and Analytical Synthesis (2025)

This three-tiered pathway demonstrates that religious literacy is converted into practical social competence, mitigating potential interpersonal friction and reducing vulnerability to radical doctrines (Asutay et al., 2022). However, this translation mechanism does not occur in an institutional vacuum; it relies strictly upon organizational enabling conditions. At SMK Syahida, this mechanism is sustained by an *actor-driven pattern*, where proactive leadership provides flexible extracurricular spaces and informal mentorship. Conversely, at SMK Al-Munawaroh, it is governed by a *regulation-oriented pattern*, anchored in formal anti-discrimination codes of conduct ([D-AM-KS-01-150625]) and structured *pesantren*-based communal routines ([O-AM-01]). Without institutional commitment and consistent educator oversight, moderation-oriented PAI risk remaining purely theoretical content without behavioral impact.

Theoretical Refinement of Group Contact Theory in Homogeneous Contexts

When evaluated against global and domestic literature, these findings confirm broader academic consensus while establishing critical boundary conditions regarding contact theory. Standard formulation of Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory—and its recent applications in European educational contexts (e.g., Fleischmann & Phalet, 2018)—posits that reduction of prejudice and cultivation of civic tolerance among Muslim

youth depend primarily upon direct, positive intergroup contact with non-Muslim majorities.

However, empirical evidence from Tasikmalaya Regency—a socio-demographically homogeneous Muslim environment—demonstrates a distinct contextual adaptation. In this setting, positive contact is not structured around physical interfaith engagement, but around the management of intra-faith diversity and the accommodation of variance in *furu'iyah* (jurisprudential ritual variations).

Table 7. Theoretical Comparison: Intergroup Contact Theory vs. Intra-Faith Moderation Framework

Analytical Dimension	Classical Intergroup Contact Model (e.g., Fleischmann & Phalet, 2018)	Intra-Faith Moderation Model (Present Study: Tasikmalaya Context)
Demographic Environment	Multi-religious / Pluralistic European urban centers.	Religiously homogeneous Muslim semi-urban/rural environment.
Primary Contact Axis	Out-group interactions (Muslim students with Non-Muslim peers).	In-group intra-faith interactions (Accommodation of distinct <i>furu'iyah</i> practices).
Institutional Mechanism	Cross-cultural integration programs and civic secular education.	Integration of formal PAI instruction with joint student organizations (<i>Rohis-OSIS</i>).
Moderation Focus	Mitigation of external xenophobia and Islamophobia.	Prevention of internal dogmatism, sectarian intolerance, and radicalization.

This comparison indicates that Intergroup Contact Theory must be conceptually reconfigured when applied to societies characterized by high macro-religious homogeneity but internal theological and cultural heterogeneity. In such contexts, school ecosystems serve as essential micro-arenas where intra-religious tolerance is modeled and habituated.

Integration with George C. Edward III's Implementation Model

To explain how distinct institutional variables interact to yield these outcomes, George C. Edward III's (1980) Policy Implementation Framework provides a robust analytical lens. The cross-site comparative execution across the four policy dimensions is synthesized in Table 2:

Table 8. Mapping PAI Moderation Internalization via Edward III's Policy Implementation Framework

Policy Dimension	Operational Mechanism at SMK Syahida (Actor-Driven)	Operational Mechanism at SMK Al-Munawaroh (Regulation-Oriented)	Theoretical Synthesis & Impact
Communication	Informal, fluid verbal briefings between leadership, PAI faculty, and student advisors ([W-SY-KS-01]).	Formal written dissemination of anti-discrimination codes and administrative assemblies ([D-AM-PK-01-150625]).	Ensures clear transmission of moderation standards across institutional tiers, preventing message ambiguity (Ansyori & Shaleh, 2020).
Resources	Constrained national PAI hours (3 hours/week); compensated by highly active student organization leaders ([W-SY-GPAI-01]).	Constrained national PAI hours (3 hours/week); compensated by physical <i>pesantren</i> infrastructure and prayer halls ([O-AM-01]).	Highlights that structural time deficits in vocational curricula are offset by non-curricular human or physical resources.
Disposition	High voluntary commitment of PAI teachers to mentor student leadership	Executive enforcement of institutional discipline and standardized behavioral	Demonstrates that actor commitment—whether bottom-up or top-down—is necessary to

	beyond official hours ([W-SY-PROHIS-01]).	expectations ([W-AM-KS-01]).	operationalize written policy goals.
Bureaucratic Structure	Flexible, project-based collaboration between <i>Rohis</i> , <i>OSIS</i> , and Scout units ([W-SY-WK-01]).	Standardized monthly coordination meetings and institutionalized daily deliberation routines ([D-AM-02-250625]).	Establishes institutional predictability, ensuring program continuity beyond individual staff tenure (Hager & Sharma, 2023).

Methodological Safeguards and Transferability Boundaries

In evaluating these analytical assertions, potential methodological limitations—specifically social desirability bias and institutional self-presentation—must be explicitly addressed. Because primary empirical evidence relies upon qualitative accounts from school leaders, PAI instructors, and student leaders, informants may naturally incline toward presenting an idealized, conflict-free institutional image.

To safeguard qualitative validity, rigorous data triangulation was systematically implemented: interview narratives were corroborated against direct non-participant field observations of student interactions ([O-SY-02], [O-AM-02]) and verified against documentary records ([D-AM-KS-01-150625], [D-SY-LKG-01-200625]). Furthermore, documentary records indicating zero recorded violent incidents ([D-AM-LT-01-240625]) were interpreted strictly as metrics of formal administrative compliance rather than absolute empirical proof of an absence of unrecorded interpersonal friction. Finally, while triangulation confirms institutional alignment and reported behavioral practices, these metrics remain qualitative and descriptive rather than longitudinal psychometric measurements of individual student attitudes.

In sum, this initial block of the Discussion establishes that strengthening religious moderation within vocational secondary education cannot be accomplished solely by expanding classroom instructional hours or altering formal syllabus documentation. Instead, it requires structural alignment across policy communication, actor disposition, and organizational space. Given the multisite qualitative design conducted across two institutions in Tasikmalaya Regency, the analytical transferability of these findings applies to vocational schools sharing similar socio-demographic and structural profiles, offering a contextualized framework for institutionalizing religious moderation in secondary education.

Institutional Dynamics and Cross-Spatial Integration of Religious Moderation Education

The theoretical evaluation of the second research question—concerning the implications and student-level manifestations of PAI and Ethics values—reveals that strengthening religious moderation within vocational secondary institutions is operationalized through a mechanism of cross-spatial ecosystem integration. As identified in the raw empirical data, the outcomes of moderation education extend beyond mere cognitive mastery. Rather, these outcomes manifest as observable social practices: mutual respect regarding ritual variations (*furu'iyah*), non-violent conflict resolution via peer-led forums, and collaborative community service (Saridudin et al., 2024; Yusuf et al., 2023). To clarify these reported and observed practices theoretically, this discussion analyzes the dynamic continuity between institutional spaces, engages critically with current academic consensus and fragmentation, and maps how structural arrangements absorb potential value ambivalence.

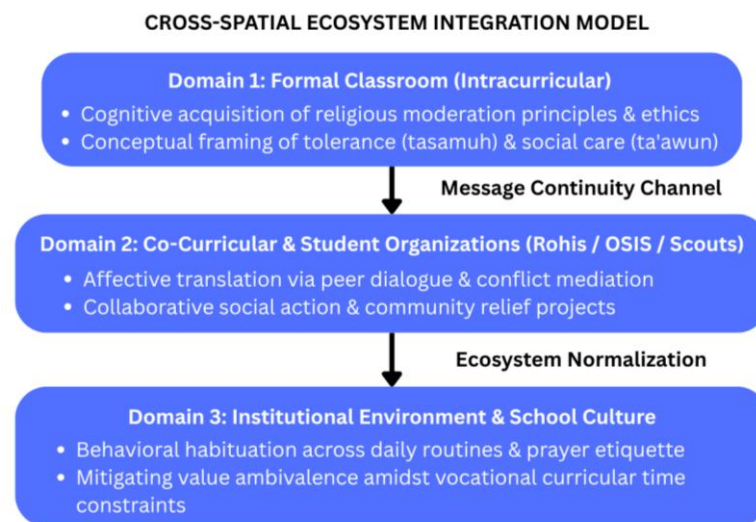


Figure 2. Cross-spatial ecosystem integration and comparative institutional dynamics: (a) Structural continuity model connecting formal classroom instruction, co-curricular student organizations, and daily institutional school culture; (b) Institutional typology matrix comparing the bottom-up actor-driven pattern of SMK Syahida with the top-down regulation-oriented pattern of SMK Al-Munawaroh.

Source: Processed Field Data and Analytical Synthesis (2025)

Mechanistic Continuity Across Institutional Domains

A primary theoretical contribution of this study lies in explaining the operational mechanism connecting classroom instruction to behavioral habituation. In conventional secondary education research, religious moderation is frequently conceptualized as static curricular content confined to formal instructional hours (Fasyiransyah et al., 2025). However, cross-site analysis demonstrates that the efficacy of moderation values depends on message continuity across three distinct spatial domains: classroom instruction, co-curricular/extracurricular activities, and broader school culture.

In vocational secondary schools—where national curricula allocate a restricted three hours per week for PAI—formal classroom time is structurally insufficient to achieve deep behavioral social conditioning. The empirical findings indicate that this structural constraint is resolved not by expanding formal lesson hours, but by utilizing student organizational networks (such as *Rohis*, *OSIS*, and *Scouts*) as operational bridges. When ethical principles introduced in the classroom (Domain 1) are reinforced within student-led organizational activities (Domain 2) and embedded within daily institutional routines (Domain 3), students experience a unified value environment (Ma'ruf et al., 2023). This spatial continuity prevents cognitive-dissonance-induced value ambivalence, ensuring that normative ethics translate directly into practical social skills.

Critical Engagement with Literature: Consensus, Expansion, and Gap Refinement

Positioning these findings within the broader academic landscape confirms existing scholarly consensus, expands partial analytical frameworks, and refines critical execution gaps in secondary education literature.

Table 9. Literature Positioning: Confirming, Expanding, and Refining Current Scholarship

Scholarly Focus	Existing Literature & Consensus	Present Study's Analytical Contribution (Tasikmalaya Context)	Theoretical Implications
Multi-Track Consensus	Asserts that character education requires integrated school culture and multi-track	Confirms that PAI moderation values foster student tolerance and ritual	Validates the universal applicability of holistic character education

	implementation (Suryana & Hilmi, 2023; M. Mulyana et al., 2023).	etiquette when aligned with school-wide habituation.	models in vocational settings.
Partial Structural Scope	Focuses predominantly on isolated normative-conceptual textbook content (Masturin, 2023) or individual teacher agency (Albana, 2023; Nasrullah et al., 2023).	Expands analysis by linking isolated actors into an integrated institutional network connecting leadership, PAI faculty, and student bodies.	Shifts scholarly focus from individual teacher attributes to institutional system dynamics.
Execution Mechanics Gap	Leaves the operational interaction between diverse actors amidst resource constraints largely unexplained (Nasrullah et al., 2023).	Refines execution gaps by demonstrating how policy communication, actor disposition, and structural routines operate simultaneously to offset time deficits.	Provides a replicable operational model for policy implementation in vocational institutions.

As delineated in Table 1, this study refines the literature by demonstrating how the interaction of institutional dimensions compensates for structural resource limitations (**Talibo & Sutrisno, 2025**). Rather than viewing limited class time as a fatal impediment, the cross-spatial integration model illustrates how institutional flexibility enables vocational schools to achieve character formation goals through existing social infrastructure.

Institutional Typologies and Policy Framework Alignment

Evaluating these outcomes through George C. Edward III's Policy Implementation framework clarifies the structural mechanics behind observed student behaviors across both research sites.

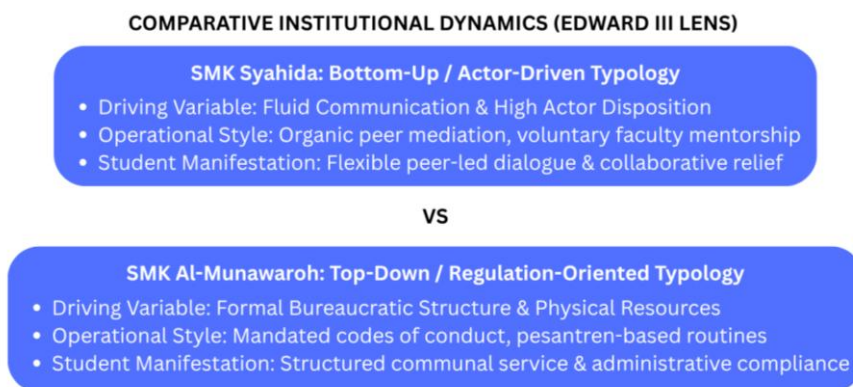


Figure 3. Comparative institutional dynamics of religious moderation implementation evaluated through George C. Edward III's policy framework: (a) Operational dynamics of the bottom-up, actor-driven pattern at SMK Syahida driven by fluid communication and voluntary teacher disposition; (b) Operational dynamics of the top-down, regulation-oriented pattern at SMK Al-Munawaroh sustained by formal administrative codes and pesantren-based routines.

Source: Processed Field Data and Analytical Synthesis (2025)

At SMK Syahida, the manifestation of tolerance and social responsibility is sustained by an actor-driven pattern, where fluid communication between PAI instructors and student leaders fosters organic peer-led mediation forums. Conversely, at SMK Al-Munawaroh, student outcomes are shaped by a regulation-oriented pattern, where formal bureaucratic mandates, anti-discrimination policies ([D-AM-KS-01-150625]), and structured *pesantren* facilities drive behavioral compliance. This comparison provides a crucial academic insight: institutional effectiveness in fostering religious moderation does not demand a single rigid organizational framework. Instead,

success depends on whether an institution can adapt its implementation strategy—whether top-down or bottom-up—to align with its internal culture and structural assets.

Epistemic Safeguards and Social Desirability Bias

To maintain interpretive rigor regarding Sub-RQ 2, potential perceptual biases—specifically social desirability bias and institutional self-presentation—must be addressed. Because empirical data on student outcomes rely substantially on qualitative reports from internal stakeholders (principals, teachers, and student leaders), informants may present an idealized image of harmonious school life.

To mitigate this bias, empirical accounts were systematically triangulated against non-participant observational logs ([O-SY-02], [O-AM-02]) and verified against documentary records ([D-SY-LKG-01-200625], [D-AM-LT-01-240625]). Furthermore, documentary evidence indicating zero official violent incidents is interpreted strictly as proof of formal administrative reporting compliance rather than definitive evidence that no unrecorded interpersonal friction occurred. Crucially, these findings must be understood as descriptive interpretations of observed institutional patterns and reported social practices, rather than psychometric measurements of individual student cognitive dispositions.

In conclusion, the theoretical clarification of Sub-RQ 2 demonstrates that the implications of PAI and ethics implementation are maximized when vocational secondary schools establish cross-spatial continuity across instructional, organizational, and cultural domains (Nursobah et al., 2025). By embedding moderation values into existing student activity spaces, institutions effectively bridge the gap between normative doctrine and daily behavioral practices.

Broad Meaning, Scientific Contributions, and Policy Implications

Synthesizing the empirical and theoretical findings across both vocational secondary institutions yields a broader conceptual insight: the operationalization of religious moderation education within Muslim-majority secondary education is fundamentally an issue of structural institutional alignment rather than curriculum volume expansion. By moving beyond a reductionist view of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as static classroom instruction, this study demonstrates how vocational schools can serve as dynamic social incubators for civic tolerance, intra-faith accommodation, and non-violent ethics (Ansyori & Shaleh, 2020; Pajariato et al., 2022).

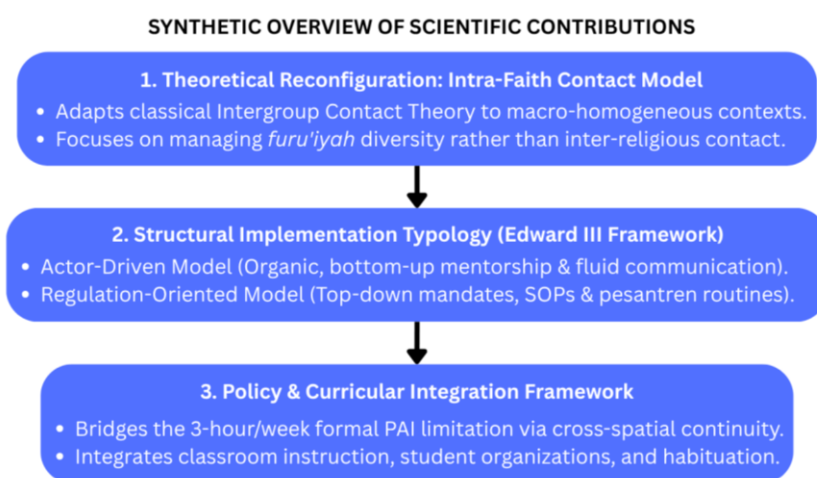


Figure 4. Synthetic overview of the core scientific and theoretical contributions: (a) Reconfiguration of Intergroup Contact Theory into an Intra-Faith Moderation Model within

macro-religiously homogeneous environments; (b) Dual institutional implementation typologies; (c) Cross-spatial integration framework resolving vocational curricular time constraints.

Source: Processed Field Data and Analytical Synthesis (2025)

Scientific and Theoretical Contributions

This research makes three distinct scientific contributions to the literature on religious education, educational policy implementation, and sociology of education in Islamic contexts:

- **Reconfiguration of Intergroup Contact Theory for Homogeneous Environments:** Classical formulations of contact theory (**Fleischmann & Phalet, 2018**) emphasize direct out-group engagement between differing religious majorities and minorities. This study refines this framework by establishing an Intra-Faith Moderation Model, proving that in religiously homogeneous environments, the primary vector for cultivating tolerance lies in accommodating internal jurisprudential diversity (*furu'iyah*) and managing intra-group theological variation (Pajarianto et al., 2022).
- **Empirical Validation of Dual Implementation Typologies:** By applying George C. Edward III's policy implementation framework to vocational secondary education, this study formulates two distinct operational typologies: the *Actor-Driven Pattern* (characterized by high teacher disposition and informal communication) and the *Regulation-Oriented Pattern* (sustained by formal bureaucratic structures and institutionalized routines). This binary classification demonstrates that religious moderation policy can be effectively operationalized through divergent structural pathways depending on an institution's organizational culture (Ma'arif et al., 2024).
- **Resolution of Curricular Time Constraints via Cross-Spatial Integration:** The study provides a mechanistic solution to the well-documented structural limitation of national vocational curricula—specifically the restricted three hours per week allocated to formal PAI. It proves that character formation and moderation values are successfully internalized when formal instruction is systematically integrated across co-curricular organizations (*Rohis*, *OSIS*, *Scouts*) and embedded within daily institutional habituation (Suryana & Hilmi, 2023).

Methodological Boundaries and Transferability Limits

To maintain academic integrity, the analytical conclusions of this study must be evaluated within their explicit methodological boundaries and transferability parameters:

- **Qualitative and Contextual Scope:** Conducted as a multisite qualitative case study across two vocational secondary schools in Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java, the findings reflect specific socio-demographic, cultural, and institutional realities. Consequently, the findings are not statistically generalizable to all secondary schools across Indonesia. However, they offer strong analytical transferability to vocational and secondary institutions sharing similar macro-religiously homogeneous profiles and structural resource constraints.
- **Epistemic Limitations of Qualitative Indicators:** Primary empirical evidence relied on qualitative interviews, non-participant field observations, and institutional document analysis. While extensive triangulation was conducted, these qualitative metrics capture reported social practices, institutional structures, and observable group behaviors rather than longitudinal psychometric transformations of individual student cognitive states.

- Administrative Compliance vs. Behavioral Dynamics: Documented metrics, such as zero recorded violent incidents ([D-AM-LT-01-240625]), reflect formal administrative reporting compliance rather than absolute empirical proof of an total absence of unrecorded, subtle interpersonal friction among students.

Policy Implications and Practical Recommendations

The empirical and theoretical insights from this study yield targeted policy recommendations for educational policymakers, curriculum designers, and school administrators:

Table 10. Actionable Policy and Practical Recommendations for Religious Moderation Integration

Stakeholder Tier	Strategic Focus	Operational Recommendation
Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) & Ministry of Education (Kemendikbudristek)	Policy & Curriculum Design	Shift policy emphasis from simply adding formal PAI classroom hours toward mandating cross-spatial co-curricular integration frameworks that connect PAI syllabi with student organization activities (<i>Rohis/OSIS</i>).
School Leaders & Principals	Institutional Infrastructure	Formalize institutional anti-discrimination codes of conduct and establish structured, peer-led mediation channels to convert abstract policy goals into predictable organizational routines (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2019).
PAI Educators & Student Advisors	Pedagogical Execution	Adopt critical pedagogical approaches that explicitly address intra-faith jurisprudential diversity (<i>furu'iyah</i>) and actively mentor student organization leaders as peer mediators of religious moderation.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that embedding religious moderation ethics within vocational secondary education requires a shift from isolated textbook instruction to an integrated institutional ecosystem. By aligning policy communication, administrative structures, teacher disposition, and student activity spaces, secondary schools can effectively cultivate sustainable practices of tolerance and civic responsibility.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the operationalization of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Ethics values to strengthen religious moderation in vocational secondary education does not function primarily through the passive expansion of classroom instructional hours, but through a continuous mechanism connecting formal instructional articulation, co-curricular mobilization, and school ecosystem habituation. Evaluating cross-site evidence from SMK Syahida and SMK Al-Munawaroh reveals that value internalization depends fundamentally on how school leadership, PAI faculty, and student organizations align their operational strategies to navigate the national vocational curriculum's structural limitation of three lesson hours per week. Applying George C. Edward III's policy implementation framework elucidates two distinct institutional typologies: an *actor-driven pattern*, sustained by fluid informal communication, high teacher disposition, and organic peer mentorship; and a *regulation-oriented pattern*,

anchored in formal administrative anti-discrimination codes, structured *pesantren*-based routines, and top-down executive enforcement. Ultimately, this research concludes that when normative ethical values are taught within formal PAI classrooms and subsequently reinforced through joint student activities and daily institutional routines, vocational schools effectively transform abstract religious principles into embedded behavioral practices of tolerance and civic responsibility.

Scientifically, this article offers significant empirical, theoretical, and contextual contributions to the fields of religious education, educational policy implementation, and sociology of Islamic education. Theoretically, it reconfigures Allport's classical Intergroup Contact Theory by establishing an *Intra-Faith Moderation Model*, proving that in macro-religiously homogeneous environments, the primary vector for cultivating tolerance lies in accommodating internal jurisprudential variations (*furu'iyah*) rather than managing direct inter-religious contact (Wahyono et al., 2022). Empirically and methodologically, by mapping Edward III's policy dimensions onto vocational secondary education, this study provides a validated dual-typology model showing that policy implementation success can be achieved through divergent structural pathways—whether bottom-up or top-down—depending on an institution's organizational culture and asset profile. Contextually, the broader implications of these findings suggest that educational policymakers, curriculum designers, and school administrators should shift strategic focus away from expanding formal syllabus documentation toward mandating cross-spatial co-curricular integration frameworks. Formalizing student organization networks (*Rohis*, *OSIS*, Scouts) as operational bridges enables educational institutions to optimize limited instructional time and cultivate sustainable environments of mutual respect.

Notwithstanding these contributions, the present study contains explicit methodological boundaries that inform its interpretation. Conducted as a qualitative multisite case study across two vocational secondary institutions in Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java, the findings offer strong analytical transferability to schools sharing similar socio-demographic profiles and structural constraints, but they are not statistically generalizable to all secondary educational contexts. Furthermore, the empirical evidence relies on qualitative interviews, observational logs, and documentary analysis, which capture reported institutional practices and observable group dynamics rather than longitudinal psychometric transformations of individual student attitudes. To address these limitations, future research should employ mixed-method designs incorporating longitudinal psychometric scaling to measure individual cognitive shifts in student tolerance over extended temporal trajectories. Additionally, future studies should extend this analytical framework to macro-religiously heterogeneous urban contexts and private non-faith-based vocational institutions to comparative test the resilience of the dual-typology implementation model across diverse demographic environments.

AI Disclosure

The authors used Gemini (Google) for language editing, grammar checking, and improving the readability of the manuscript. The authors reviewed and edited the output and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and content of this publication.

Author Contributions

CRedit: Ina Maryana: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft; Usep Abdul Matin: Formal analysis, Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing; Zakaria: Project administration, Resources, Validation, Writing – review & editing; Ridlwan Nasir: Supervision, Validation,

Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing; Abdulghani Tehmamad: Validation, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing.

Disclosure Statement / Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no potential conflict of interest—whether financial, professional, institutional, or personal—related to the research, data interpretation, authorship, or publication of this article.

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