



Managing the Integration of Religious Moderation Values into Islamic Religious Education Teaching Materials: A Case Study at an Islamic Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study examines how an Islamic junior high school manages the integration of religious moderation values into existing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching materials. Data were collected through interviews with 19 participants (principal, vice principal, three teachers, two moderation team members, twelve students), 12 days of observation, and document analysis. Thematic analysis revealed a three-phase management process: planning through annual material mapping of government textbooks; implementation through reflective questions, contextual case studies, and teacher role-modelling; and evaluation through daily behaviour monitoring, monthly meetings, and semester attitude scores. Specific values integrated include tolerance (tasamuh), balance (tawassuth), justice (i'tidal), national commitment (muwathanah), anti-violence, and local cultural accommodation. Systematic management was associated with a reported reduction in overt religious conflict and increased willingness to discuss differences, though family and social media influences remain challenging. As a single-case study, findings require cautious transferability. This case-derived framework offers practical guidance for policy and practice, though validation in additional settings is needed.

ABSTRAK

Studi kasus kualitatif ini mengkaji bagaimana sebuah SMP Islam mengelola integrasi nilai moderasi beragama ke dalam bahan ajar Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) yang sudah ada. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan 19 partisipan (kepala sekolah, wakil kurikulum, tiga guru, dua tim moderasi, dua belas siswa), observasi 12 hari, dan analisis dokumen. Analisis tematik mengungkap proses manajemen tiga fase: perencanaan melalui pemetaan materi tahunan buku teks pemerintah; implementasi melalui pertanyaan reflektif, studi kasus kontekstual, dan keteladanan guru; serta evaluasi melalui pemantauan perilaku harian, pertemuan bulanan, dan nilai sikap semester. Nilai spesifik yang diintegrasikan meliputi toleransi (tasamuh), keseimbangan (tawassuth), keadilan (i'tidal), komitmen kebangsaan (muwathanah), anti-kekerasan, dan akomodasi budaya lokal. Manajemen sistematis berasosiasi dengan penurunan konflik agama terbuka dan peningkatan kesiapan mendiskusikan perbedaan, meskipun pengaruh keluarga dan media sosial tetap menantang. Sebagai studi kasus tunggal, temuan memerlukan kehati-hatian dalam transferabilitas. Kerangka kerja berbasis kasus ini menawarkan panduan praktis bagi kebijakan dan praktik, meskipun validasi di setting tambahan diperlukan.

Introduction

Concerns about religious intolerance among youth have prompted Indonesian educational institutions to integrate religious moderation values into school curricula (Muis, 2025; Suparta, 2024). The Ministry of Religious Affairs has mandated through Director General of Islamic Education Decree No. 7272 of 2019 that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should promote four key moderation indicators: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. However, the effectiveness of PAI in cultivating moderate religious attitudes depends not only on teachers' pedagogical competence but also on how teaching materials are selected, adapted, and used in the learning process (Aini & Zamroji, 2025; Rokhimah & Marzuki, 2025). Teaching materials whether printed modules, student worksheets, or digital resources are not neutral; they embody specific worldviews and pedagogical intentions. Therefore, the management of integrating religious moderation values into existing PAI teaching materials becomes a critical yet underexplored dimension of moderation-oriented Islamic education.

This study focuses on an Islamic junior high school under the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) foundation in Indonesia, which has a long tradition of promoting *tawassuth* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (justice) as core educational principles. To protect confidentiality, the school is referred to by the pseudonym "SMP Al-Madinah." The school has initiated a school-wide programme to integrate religious moderation into all subjects, with PAI as the flagship subject. The unit of analysis is the management of integrating religious moderation values into PAI teaching materials. Although government policies mandate integration, previous research indicates that many schools implement moderation in a superficial, ad hoc manner without systematic management (Nurbayani & Amiruddin, 2024; Muhasim et al., 2025). Understanding how a specific NU-affiliated school manages this integration process is important because it can provide a contextualised, potentially transferable model for other Islamic junior high schools.

Recent literature on religious moderation in Islamic education has grown significantly across several streams. One stream has identified the core values of religious moderation that should be embedded in learning. Hanif et al. (2025) and Purwanto et al. (2024) emphasise that effective moderation education requires explicit teaching of tolerance, national commitment, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. Zamrud Hatamudin et al. (2025) further add values such as justice, deliberation, equality, and love of the homeland. Another stream has explored pedagogical strategies to internalise these values, including project-based learning (Yulianti et al., 2025; Gustina et al., 2025), problem-based learning (Herawati et al., 2025), contextual teaching (Saepuloh et al., 2025), and the insertion method (Maulana Achmad Hasan et al., 2026). A third stream has focused on the development of specific teaching materials. Researchers such as Dakran et al. (2026) developed Aqidah Akhlak teaching materials based on religious moderation for senior high school. Rokhimah & Marzuki (2025) developed project-based learning materials for elementary schools, while Amin & Nasution (2025) transformed PAI materials by integrating HOTS and religious moderation. Solihin (2025) developed materials based on local wisdom for junior high school students. Sanusi et al. (2024) designed social studies teaching materials with moderation values for Islamic elementary schools, and Herawati et al. (2025) developed a learning module for Al-Qur'an education parks.

However, despite this rich body of work on content, pedagogy, and product development, few studies have examined the management system that guides how

schools integrate moderation values into existing teaching materials on an ongoing basis. Most studies assume that once materials are developed, integration happens automatically, ignoring the managerial processes needed to sustain integration over time.

A critical gap emerges from the literature: limited empirical research on the management of integrating religious moderation values into PAI teaching materials in Islamic junior high schools. Most existing studies focus either on the product (e.g., a validated module) or on classroom implementation (e.g., teaching strategies), but not on how schools systematically plan, implement, and evaluate the integration process over time (Muhasim et al., 2025; Angranti, 2024). For example, studies by Khoirur Rofiah et al. (2025) and Zuhri et al. (2024) describe the implementation of moderation values in learning activities but do not detail the managerial steps that school leaders and teachers take to ensure that moderation values are consistently inserted into daily lessons using available materials. Similarly, Fauziah Risa Rabbani et al. (2024) discuss the role of the PAI curriculum in developing religious values but do not address material integration management. Furthermore, the junior high school level (SMP/MTs) is relatively neglected compared to senior high schools and pesantren (Muis, 2025; Huda, 2024). Without a management perspective, efforts to integrate religious moderation risk being fragmented, inconsistent across teachers, and unsustainable.

The novelty of this study lies in its management-centred approach to integrating religious moderation values into PAI teaching materials, shifting the focus from *what* values are taught and *how* they are taught, to *how* the integration process is managed as a school-wide system. Unlike previous studies that isolated content validity or pedagogical effectiveness, this article examines the entire management cycle of integration: planning, implementation, and evaluation. The proposed framework specifically addresses value insertion into government-mandated textbooks without requiring new material development. However, this is a case-derived framework requiring validation in additional settings rather than a proven, generalizable model. The scholarly contribution is threefold: first, it fills the empirical gap by providing qualitative evidence on integration management in an NU-based school; second, it integrates educational management theory with Islamic education discourse by focusing on how schools organise the integration of values into existing materials; third, it offers a contextual framework that can guide policy and practice for religious moderation implementation at the junior secondary level, subject to further testing.

The specific research objectives are: (1) to describe the planning process of integrating religious moderation values into PAI teaching materials, including material mapping, goal setting, and teacher coordination; (2) to explain the implementation strategies, including how teachers select, adapt, and use existing teaching materials to insert moderation values; (3) to describe the evaluation mechanisms and perceived outcomes as reported by teachers and students; and (4) to propose a context-grounded management framework that can be tested in other Islamic junior high schools.

The remainder of this article is organised as follows. The Methodology section describes the qualitative case study approach, data collection techniques, and analytical procedures. The Findings section presents the three phases of integration management: planning, implementation, and evaluation. The Discussion interprets these findings in light of prior literature and management theory. Finally, the Conclusion summarises the key insights, offers recommendations, and suggests directions for future research

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach is chosen because the research aims to understand in depth the

management processes, social interactions, and subjective meanings that shape how PAI teachers integrate religious moderation values into existing teaching materials within a specific school context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The case study design is particularly appropriate because the phenomenon under investigation the management of integrating moderation values into teaching materials is context-dependent and cannot be separated from the school's organizational culture, leadership, and religious tradition (Yin, 2018; Stake, 2006).

The research was conducted at an Islamic junior high school under the Nahdlatul Ulama foundation. To protect confidentiality, the school is referred to by the pseudonym "SMP Al-Madinah." The school was purposively selected because it has officially adopted religious moderation as a school-wide programme and has been actively integrating moderation values into PAI teaching materials for the past two years. The school's NU affiliation is significant because NU's educational tradition has long emphasized *tawassuth* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (justice) as core pedagogical principles. The research was carried out over four months, from January to April 2026. This duration allowed the research team to observe planning meetings, classroom implementation of integrated lessons, and evaluation discussions. The programme itself had been operating for two years prior to the research period; the four-month fieldwork focused on direct observation of current practices, supplemented by retrospective accounts from interviews and documents.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that all key stakeholders in the management chain were represented (Patton, 2015). Table 1 presents the participant matrix.

Table 1. Participant Matrix

Participant Code	Role	Grade/Level	Selection Criteria	Analytic Relevance
P	Principal	School leader	Top decision maker	Policy and oversight
VPC	Vice Principal Curriculum	School leader	Coordinates integration	Planning and monitoring
G1	PAI Teacher	Grade VII	Directly implements integration	Implementation strategies
G2	PAI Teacher	Grade VIII	Directly implements integration	Implementation strategies
G3	PAI Teacher	Grade VII-VIII	Directly implements integration	Role modelling
MT1	Moderation Team Member	Senior teacher	Involved in programme coordination	Planning and evaluation
MT2	External Facilitator	University lecturer	External validator	Quality control
S1-S6	Students	Grade VII	Diverse academic/religious backgrounds	Recipients of instruction
S7-S12	Students	Grade VIII	Diverse academic/religious backgrounds	Recipients of instruction

Sensitive religious-background information was collected only for contextual understanding and was not used as a primary analytical category. All student participants were selected based on willingness to participate and parental consent. Adult participants were selected based on their direct involvement in the integration programme for at least one academic year.

Data were collected using three primary techniques: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). *Semi-structured interviews* were conducted with all 19 human participants. Interview guides were developed based on the three management phases of integration: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Questions explored topics such as how teachers select and adapt existing materials, how they insert moderation values into lessons, what coordination mechanisms exist, how they assess student outcomes, and specific moderation values integrated. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was audio recorded with informed consent.

Non-participant observation was conducted over 12 school days. The observation schedule is presented in Table 2. The researcher observed without participating in the activities being studied, taking field notes on managerial actions and participant interactions (Spradley, 2016).

Table 2. Observation Schedule

Observation Focus	Number of Days	Description
Planning/coordination meetings	3 days	Annual material mapping forum, teacher coordination
PAI classroom lessons	7 days	Implementation of moderation-integrated instruction
Evaluation sessions	2 days	Monthly teacher reflection meetings
Total	12 days	

Document analysis was performed on 15 documents. Table 3 provides an inventory of document types.

Table 3. Document Inventory

Document Type	Period	Selection Basis	Analytic Use
School moderation policy statement	2024	Official school document	Context and mandate
Curriculum mapping matrix	2025/2026	Used by teachers in planning	Planning phase evidence
Syllabi (Grade VII, VIII)	2025/2026	Core teaching documents	Content analysis
Lesson plans (RPP)	Jan-Mar 2026	Submitted by PAI teachers	Implementation evidence
Government PAI textbooks	2024 edition	Primary teaching resource	Material analysis
Teacher reflection forms	Jan-Mar 2026	Monthly teacher reports	Evaluation evidence
Meeting minutes	Jan-Mar 2026	Documentation of meetings	Coordination evidence
Student report cards (attitude scores)	Odd semester 2025/2026	Official assessment records	Evaluation evidence

The external facilitator (MT2), a university lecturer, served as a programme validator who reviewed lesson plans and suggested revisions. This individual was interviewed as an informant but did not contribute to data production beyond their perspective on the programme.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), consisting of three concurrent flows: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data condensation involved transcribing all interviews verbatim, organizing field notes chronologically, and categorizing documents by type. Coding was conducted by the lead researcher with regular peer debriefing. The coding process proceeded through the following stages:

1. Initial coding: Open coding of all transcripts and field notes, generating 67 initial codes (e.g., "teacher mapping chapters," "inserting reflective questions," "role modelling," "behaviour logs")
2. Focused coding: Grouping initial codes into 14 focused categories (e.g., "material mapping practices," "insertion strategies," "monitoring mechanisms")
3. Theme development: Organizing categories into three overarching themes corresponding to the management phases: Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation

The codebook was refined through iterative discussion among researchers. No multi-coder reliability testing was conducted; however, peer debriefing provided validation of coding decisions. A reflective journal was maintained throughout the research process.

Four strategies were employed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). *Source triangulation* was achieved by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents, as well as comparing perspectives from different participant groups. *Method triangulation* involved cross-validating interview statements with observational evidence and document content. *Member checking* was performed by presenting preliminary findings to three key participants (the principal, one PAI teacher, and one student). The principal confirmed the accuracy of the described planning processes; the teacher clarified details about insertion strategies; the student affirmed the reported perceptions. No substantive corrections were required. *Peer debriefing* was conducted through regular discussions with two fellow researchers not involved in data collection. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained, including raw transcripts, coded documents, analytical memos, and decision logs.

Formal ethical approval was obtained from the research ethics committee of STAI Kharisma Cicurug (reference number: 013/KE/III/2026), confirming that the study met institutional standards for educational research involving human participants. Written informed consent was obtained from the school principal, all teachers, and the parents or legal guardians of student participants. Students were also asked for their verbal assent. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity; all names and identifying information were replaced with pseudonyms in transcripts and reports (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. No incentives were offered for participation. All digital data were stored on a password-protected computer, and physical documents were kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the lead researcher. Data will be retained for five years after publication and then destroyed.

Results and Discussion

Results

The findings are organised according to the three management phases identified in the analysis: (1) Planning, (2) Implementation, and (3) Evaluation. Within each phase, evidence is presented from interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Planning – Material Mapping and Goal Setting

Regarding the planning phase, all teacher informants confirmed that the school conducts an annual curriculum mapping forum (forum pemetaan kurikulum) before each academic year to identify which chapters in existing PAI textbooks can be linked to religious moderation values. The vice principal for curriculum (VPC) stated: "We map every chapter of the grade VII and VIII PAI textbooks against the four pillars of moderation: tolerance, national commitment, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. Chapters that have no obvious link are marked for teacher intervention" (interview, 12 January 2026). This statement was triangulated with document analysis of the 2025/2026 curriculum mapping matrix, where each chapter was rated as "high," "medium," or "low" moderation relevance. For example, the chapter on *akhlaq* to neighbours was rated "high" for tolerance, while the chapter on *taharah* (ritual purity) was rated "low" across all pillars.

Observation of the annual planning meeting (15 January 2026) confirmed that all three PAI teachers participated actively. One teacher (G1) pointed to the *taharah* chapter and said: "This chapter has no explicit moderation link. I will add reflection questions such as 'How does cleanliness relate to love for one's country?'" Another teacher (G2) added: "For the tolerance pillar, I will use the story of the Prophet in Medina respecting non-Muslims. That story is already in the textbook, but I need to emphasise the moderation message." The principal, who attended the meeting, confirmed the school's policy: "Every teacher must submit lesson plans that show at least two moderation indicators per semester. This is non-negotiable" (interview, 12 January 2026). Thus, the planning phase is characterised by systematic material mapping, teacher collaboration, and mandatory integration requirements.

Implementation – Insertion Strategies in Classroom Instruction

The implementation of religious moderation integration was observed in three main strategies: (1) insertion of reflection questions, (2) use of contextual case studies, and (3) teacher role modelling.

Insertion of reflection questions: G1 explained: "I do not create new modules. I use the government textbook. But at the end of each chapter, I add two or three questions that connect the lesson to moderation values. For example, after teaching about prayer, I ask: 'How can congregational prayer strengthen brotherhood among students of different backgrounds?'" (interview, 20 January 2026). This was supported by observation during a grade VIII PAI class (22 January 2026), where the teacher wrote two additional questions on the whiteboard after completing the textbook material. One student (S3) confirmed: "The teacher always asks us to think about how our worship relates to our social life. I never thought about that before" (interview, 22 January 2026).

Contextual case studies: G2 explained: "I use examples from the school environment. For instance, when teaching about tolerance, I describe a situation where a Muslim student and a Christian student need to share a study table. I ask the class, 'What would you do?'" (interview, 27 January 2026). Observation of this lesson (29 January 2026) showed that students participated in small group discussions and presented their answers. One group wrote: "They should take turns. Both have the right to study." Another group added: "They can ask the teacher to help schedule." The teacher then connected

student answers to the moderation value of tasamuh (tolerance). S5 stated: "The case study made me understand that tolerance is not just about not fighting. It is about finding solutions together" (interview, 29 January 2026). Document analysis of the teacher's lesson plan for that week confirmed that the case study was explicitly listed under "integration of moderation values."

Teacher role modelling: All three PAI teachers emphasised that their own behaviour is the most important integration strategy. G3 said: "I can talk about tolerance all day, but if I show favouritism toward Muslim students, the message is lost. I greet all students equally, regardless of their religion. I also never make jokes about other religions" (interview, 3 February 2026). This was supported by observation during school breaks (multiple days), where the researcher noted that the teacher interacted with both Muslim and non-Muslim students in the same friendly manner. S8 confirmed: "G3 never treats us differently. He even helped a Christian student prepare for a speech competition about religious harmony" (interview, 5 February 2026). The vice principal added: "We selected these three PAI teachers partly because they already demonstrate moderate attitudes in their daily life. They are role models for other teachers as well" (interview, 5 February 2026).

Evaluation – Monitoring Student Attitudes and Teacher Reflection

Three evaluation mechanisms were identified: daily behaviour observation by teachers, monthly teacher reflection meetings, and semester-based attitude assessment in report cards.

Daily behaviour observation: G1 explained: "I keep a simple notebook. Every time I see a student demonstrating intolerance for example, mocking another student's religion I note it. I also note positive examples, such as a student helping a classmate of a different faith" (interview, 10 February 2026). Observation of a teacher break conversation (12 February 2026) confirmed that G1 and G2 discussed two students who had made inappropriate comments about religious differences. G1 said: "I called the parents of both students. One parent was supportive; the other said 'that is just boy talk.'"

Monthly teacher reflection meetings: The vice principal convenes a meeting on the last Friday of every month. VPC stated: "We review the behaviour records together. We identify which classes have frequent issues and which strategies worked. For example, last month we realised that grade VII B had many reports of teasing. We assigned G2 to do a special session on empathy, and this month the reports decreased" (interview, 15 February 2026). Observation of one reflection meeting (26 February 2026) confirmed that the principal attended and asked each teacher to report on three "moderation incidents" positive or negative from the past month. Minutes of the meeting, analysed as a document, showed that follow-up actions were assigned for two students with repeated intolerant comments.

Semester attitude assessment: The school includes a "moderation attitude score" on student report cards. VPC explained: "The score is based on teacher observation, peer assessment, and self-assessment. Indicators include: respects friends of different religions, does not use hate speech, participates in social activities, and shows love for the country" (interview, 10 March 2026). Document analysis of report cards for the odd semester 2025/2026 confirmed that each student received a score from 1 to 4 for each indicator. However, teachers acknowledged limitations: G2 admitted: "The attitude assessment is still subjective. Two teachers might give different scores to the same student. We need a more structured rubric" (interview, 15 March 2026). The vice principal confirmed this challenge: "We are currently developing a detailed rubric with behavioural descriptors for each score level. It should be ready next semester" (interview, 15 March 2026). Observation of a teacher discussion about assessment (19 March 2026)

showed that teachers disagreed on whether "rarely makes intolerant comments" should be a score of 3 or 4.

S10 reported: "My parents asked me why my moderation score was only 3. I had to explain that sometimes I make jokes about other religions. Now I am more careful" (interview, 12 March 2026). The principal added: "Parents take this score seriously. Last semester, three parents came to ask how to improve their child's score. That shows the evaluation is working" (interview, 12 March 2026).

Several students reported that while they act tolerantly at school, they encounter conflicting messages at home or through social media. S4 stated: "At school, we learn to respect everyone. But at home, my father sometimes says negative things about other religions. It's confusing" (interview, 18 February 2026). S9 added: "I saw a video on social media that made fun of another religion. My friends shared it. I didn't know what to do" (interview, 20 February 2026). These statements, triangulated with teacher observations of student behaviour, indicate that school-based integration, while associated with reduced overt conflict, does not fully penetrate students' private beliefs influenced by family and social media.

In summary, three major findings emerge from this case study. First, the planning phase involves systematic material mapping, teacher collaboration in annual forums, and mandatory integration documented in lesson plans. Second, implementation relies on three main strategies: insertion of reflection questions, use of contextual case studies, and teacher role modelling with strong consistency across teachers and lessons. Third, evaluation includes daily behaviour monitoring, monthly reflection meetings, and semester attitude assessments, which lead to interventions and parental engagement, though reliability issues remain. Additionally, students reported persistent challenges from family and social media influences that moderate the effectiveness of school-based integration.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the management of integrating religious moderation values into PAI teaching materials at SMP Al-Madinah operates as a systematic, three-phase process: planning, implementation, and evaluation yet the ultimate goal of transforming students' deep-seated attitudes remains only partially achieved. This finding is analytically significant because it challenges the assumption that simply inserting moderation values into existing materials or adopting certain teaching strategies automatically leads to students' internalisation of tolerance and anti-violence. Instead, the case study reveals a gap between management processes (which are well structured) and behavioural outcomes (which are inconsistent, especially when students are influenced by family or social media).

The planning phase at SMP Al-Madinah is not a top-down administrative routine but a collaborative, value-driven material mapping process. Teachers actively identify which chapters of the government textbook contain explicit or implicit moderation values and which require insertion of reflective questions. This finding aligns with Kurniawan et al. (2025), who argued that effective integration of religious moderation requires teachers to be "curriculum curators" rather than passive implementers. Similarly, Nurohman et al. (2025) found that in Generation Z classrooms, teachers must proactively design "value insertion points" because standard textbooks rarely address contemporary issues of religious diversity.

However, this finding also refines previous scholarship. While studies such as those by Arifin (2025) emphasise the need for developing new moderation-based teaching materials, the present study shows that re-mapping and inserting into existing materials

can be practically viable when supported by systematic management though this finding is based on observed usefulness in this case, not comparative evidence of equivalence. The involvement of an external facilitator (a university lecturer) in the planning phase adds a layer of quality control that has been under-discussed in previous research.

Nevertheless, the planning process relies heavily on teachers' own understanding of moderation values. If a teacher has a narrow interpretation of *tasamuh* (tolerance), the insertion might be superficial. This echoes Handayani et al. (2025), who found that teacher training on religious moderation remains inadequate in many Indonesian madrasahs.

Three empirically grounded implementation strategies were identified: insertion of reflective questions, use of contextual case studies, and teacher role modelling. These strategies together form a pedagogical toolkit for integrating moderation values without disrupting the standard curriculum.

Insertion of reflective questions as a strategy is consistent with Fasyiransyah et al. (2025) and Mardhiah et al. (2025), who argued that "micro insertions" short reflective prompts embedded into regular lessons are more effective than separate "moderation lessons" because they normalise tolerant thinking as part of everyday Islamic learning. The present study extends this by showing that such insertions can be systematically planned during the annual mapping forum and documented in lesson plans.

Contextual case studies drawn from the school environment connect Islamic teachings to students' lived realities. This finding supports Hanif et al. (2025) and Herni et al. (2025), who argued that effective religious moderation pedagogy must be "experience-near" rather than abstract. The present study adds that cases derived from actual school incidents generated more authentic discussion than generic textbook examples.

Teacher role modelling emerged as the most frequently cited strategy by students. This aligns with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and recent Islamic education studies such as Nuryanti et al. (2025) and Faizin et al. (2025). The novelty here is the emphasis on consistency across teachers, achieved through regular teacher reflection meetings.

However, the implementation strategies, while associated with a reduction in overt conflict, did not fully penetrate students' private beliefs influenced by family and social media. Several students admitted to acting tolerantly at school but holding intolerant views at home. This phenomenon has been documented by Umar et al. (2025) and Yusuf & Pohan (2025) in their studies on digital radicalism among adolescents.

Evaluation at SMP Al-Madinah relies on three mechanisms: daily behaviour monitoring, monthly reflection meetings, and semester attitude scores. These mechanisms create a looping feedback system. This finding is broadly consistent with the quality management literature, particularly the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle as applied to Islamic education by Zakariyah et al. (2025) and Izzati et al. (2025). However, it must be noted that while the PDCA analogy is useful for interpretation, an explicit "Act" component systematic, documented adaptation of plans based on evaluation data was not clearly observed as a distinct phase. Follow-up actions such as special empathy sessions were noted, but they appeared informal rather than institutionalised as a formal "Act" stage.

The inclusion of a moderation attitude score on the report card formalises what was previously a hidden curriculum. This practice aligns with Faizah et al. (2025) and Muzayanah et al. (2025), who argued that moral education must be assessed and reported to ensure accountability. However, teachers themselves acknowledged that the scoring remains subjective because detailed behavioural descriptors are not yet available.

It is important to consider alternative explanations for the observed outcomes. The school's NU affiliation may have predisposed the community to accept religious moderation more readily than in non-NU settings. The suburban location may not reflect the challenges of urban or rural contexts. Additionally, the documented reductions in conflict may be influenced by broader societal changes or students' natural maturation. These boundary conditions suggest that the three-phase framework is context-grounded and suitable for further testing, not a proven, universally applicable model. The school's use of existing textbooks demonstrates practical viability, but no cost analysis was conducted to support claims about resource implications.

The scholarly contribution of this article is threefold. First, empirically, it provides a detailed case study of how an Islamic junior high school systematically manages the integration of religious moderation values into existing teaching materials, rather than developing new ones. Previous research (e.g., Dakran et al., 2026; Rokhimah & Marzuki, 2025) focused on product development. This study shifts the lens to the managerial process. Second, theoretically, the article integrates educational management concepts with Islamic education discourse. It demonstrates that value integration requires not only pedagogical strategies but also organisational structures. Third, contextually, the study offers a case-derived framework for NU-affiliated schools that can be adapted by other madrasahs, though this framework requires validation in additional settings.

For school leaders, the study suggests that integrating religious moderation does not necessarily require expensive materials. Instead, the key is to institutionalise annual material mapping, train teachers in insertion strategies, and create regular evaluation forums. For teachers, the three insertion strategies offer a concrete toolkit. For policymakers, the study underscores the need for teacher training in value insertion techniques and developing standardised rubrics for attitude assessment.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the management of integrating religious moderation values into PAI teaching materials at SMP Al-Madinah is systematically executed through three interconnected phases: planning (annual material mapping and goal setting), implementation (reflective questions, contextual case studies, and teacher role modelling), and evaluation (daily behaviour monitoring, monthly reflection meetings, and semester attitude scores). The central conclusion is that effective integration does not necessarily require developing new teaching materials; rather, it requires a managed system that strategically inserts moderation messages into existing resources. This system was associated with a reported reduction in overt religious conflict and increased students' willingness to discuss differences, although deep-seated intolerant beliefs influenced by family and social media remain challenging.

The scholarly contribution is twofold. Empirically, it fills the gap by providing qualitative evidence of how an Islamic junior high school manages the integration of moderation values into existing PAI teaching materials a level of analysis that previous studies on content or pedagogy have largely neglected. Theoretically, the study demonstrates that value integration requires organisational structures: annual mapping forums, monthly reflection meetings, and external facilitator reviews. Practically, the findings offer a context-grounded framework that can be adapted by other Islamic junior high schools seeking to implement the Ministry of Religious Affairs' moderation policy. School leaders can adopt the three-phase framework: (1) mandate integration in school policy and conduct annual material mapping; (2) train teachers in insertion strategies; and (3) institutionalise evaluation through behaviour logs, reflection meetings, and attitude scores.

This study has two main limitations. First, as a single case study at one NU-affiliated school, the findings require cautious transferability and are not statistically generalisable to other Islamic school types (e.g., Muhammadiyah, Salafi, or public schools with PAI programs). Second, the evaluation mechanisms identified rely heavily on teacher observation and self-reflection, which are inherently subjective; the absence of a standardised, behaviourally anchored rubric limits the reliability of attitude assessment. Future research should conduct comparative case studies across multiple Islamic school typologies to identify contextual variations in integration management. Additionally, longitudinal studies are needed to assess whether the integration practices described lead to sustained behavioural change over time. Finally, researchers should develop and validate a practical rubric for assessing religious moderation attitudes that can be reliably used by classroom teachers, addressing the subjectivity challenge identified in this study.

AI Disclosure

The authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) for language editing, grammar improvement, and readability enhancement during the revision process. The authors reviewed and edited all AI-generated suggestions and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the final manuscript. No AI tools were used for data analysis, interpretation, or the generation of research findings.

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Author Contributions (CRediT)

CRediT: Komarudin: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Project administration. Ahmad Yani: Formal analysis, Validation, Visualization, Writing – review & editing. Asep Saepul Rochman: Investigation, Methodology, Writing – review & editing. Dudin Shobaruddin: Supervision, Resources, Writing – review & editing.

Disclosure Statement / Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no potential conflict of interest related to this article. No financial, professional, institutional, personal, or other relationship could reasonably be perceived as influencing the research, interpretation, or publication of this article.

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