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Internalizing Religious Moderation in an Al-Qur'an-Based School: Strategies for Developing Inclusive Student Character at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong

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Abstract

Objective: This study critically examines the mechanisms of internalization of religious moderation values in fostering inclusive student character at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. **Theoretical framework:** This study grounds its analytical framework on the three-stage value internalization model, comprising value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization, supported by core principles of Islamic religious moderation (wasathiyyah). **Literature review:** Previous studies have primarily examined religious moderation in general schools and madrasahs. However, limited empirical attention has been given to how religious moderation values are integrated into formal Islamic education and dormitory life within Al-Qur'an-based schools with relatively homogeneous religious environments. **Methods:** This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through interviews with an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, a dormitory supervisor, and Grade 8 students, complemented by observations and document analysis. **Results:** The findings reveal three interconnected stages of value internalization. First, value transformation occurs through the delivery of religious moderation principles in classroom instruction and dormitory activities. Second, value transaction is implemented through habituation and the cultivation of an inclusive school culture. Third, value transinternalization is reflected in students' daily behaviours, including openness, respect for differences, and rejection of violent extremism. **Implications:** The findings suggest that integrating religious moderation values into classroom learning and dormitory practices may support the development of inclusive student character through consistent educational experiences and daily social interactions. **Novelty:** This study offers a context-specific perspective by examining the integration of the three stages of value internalization within formal Islamic education and dormitory life in an Al-Qur'an-based Islamic school.

Keywords: religious moderation, value internalization, inclusive character, islamic education, al-Qur'an-based school

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's religious, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity creates a distinctive educational context in which the development of religious identity must be considered alongside the cultivation of inclusive citizenship. Religious education is particularly important in this context because schools are expected to strengthen students' religious commitments while preparing them to participate responsibly in a pluralistic society. Harjatanaya demonstrates that religious education in Indonesia is shaped not only by national policies but also by institutional practices, local cultures, and the ways schools accommodate religious differences. Nevertheless, a commitment to national unity does not necessarily ensure inclusive attitudes toward other social and religious groups [1]. Putra identify a complex relationship between national identification, religious identification, and exclusionary political orientations in Indonesia [2]. Similarly, Mulya and Aditomo show how students construct understandings of religious tolerance through nationalist and theological discourses during educational activities [3]. These findings highlight the importance of educational approaches that connect religious identity with respect for differences, equal dignity, and constructive relationships across religious and cultural boundaries.

Within the Indonesian educational and policy context, religious moderation refers to a balanced, just, and non-violent approach to understanding and practising religion while maintaining religious commitment and respecting the rights of others. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs identifies four principal indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation of local culture. These indicators provide a nationally situated framework for examining how religious beliefs are expressed in social relationships and everyday conduct. Religious moderation should therefore not be interpreted as weakening religious conviction, but rather as encouraging responsible religious practice within a diverse society. Research in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools indicates that moderation can emerge through the interaction between scriptural understanding, contextual reasoning, and social practices. Qorib and Umiarso identify the integration of theological, sociological, and anthropological perspectives in moderation practices within Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama pesantren [4]. Hady further demonstrates how Islamic textual traditions can be interpreted in relation to local cultures and practices of coexistence [5]. Together, these studies provide a conceptual basis for examining religious moderation as both a religious orientation and a set of socially enacted values.

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) occupies a significant position in connecting Islamic teachings with students' moral development and social responsibilities. Its educational purposes extend beyond the acquisition of doctrinal knowledge to include the development of ethical judgement, respect for diversity, and responsible conduct in everyday life. In a systematic review of secondary education, Muis identifies curriculum goals, learning experiences, instructional methods, and assessment as interconnected dimensions of integrating religious moderation into Islamic education [6]. However, the presence of tolerance-related content in instructional materials does not by itself establish that students have developed tolerant attitudes or behaviours. Alabdulhadi, in an analysis of Islamic education textbooks in Kuwait, demonstrates the importance of examining how religious tolerance is represented in educational content [7]. In Indonesia, Ikhrom identify intolerant elements in Islamic educational textbooks, highlighting the need for critical curriculum evaluation [8]. Firdaus further examine a multi-faith textbook assessment programme in Indonesia, illustrating how collaborative evaluation can identify problematic religious content while respecting theological differences [9]. These studies suggest that the integration of religious moderation into IRE requires attention to educational content, pedagogical processes, and the values communicated through learning environments.

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Despite growing attention to religious moderation, its implementation within Islamic educational institutions remains complex. Religious education operates within institutional arrangements that must negotiate relationships between national educational objectives, religious traditions, and local expectations. Ihsan demonstrate the challenges Indonesian madrasahs encounter when integrating national and religious curricula [10], while Mukhibat examine the development and evaluation of a structured religious moderation curriculum in Indonesian higher education [11]. Nevertheless, incorporating moderation into formal educational programmes does not necessarily guarantee its internalization into students' character. Chotimah identify problems of superficial implementation, particularly when moderation is treated predominantly as textual knowledge rather than as a transformative educational practice [12]. Similarly, Zulkarnain reports that religious moderation education in several Indonesian madrasahs often emphasizes theoretical instruction without sufficient connection to lived experience [13]. These findings indicate the need to investigate how schools move beyond the communication of religious moderation concepts toward their consistent enactment in educational relationships and daily activities.

The development of inclusive student character consequently requires pedagogical approaches that connect religious understanding with dialogue, reflection, social participation, and meaningful interpersonal experiences. Mulya demonstrate that Indonesian Muslim pre-service teachers construct their understandings of religious tolerance through multiple, sometimes competing, discourses [14]. Beyond religious education, research on intergroup relations provides complementary evidence for the importance of social interaction in developing inclusive attitudes. Váradi find that new intergroup contacts can weaken the association between prejudicial peer norms and adolescents' attitudes [15]. Reimer reports that a large-scale contact-based intervention reduced intergroup anxiety and increased perspective-taking among adolescents, although it did not produce clear improvements across all measures of intergroup relations [16]. Yücel also investigated a multimodal intervention combining direct contact, shared activities, and socio-cognitive learning among adolescents from different social backgrounds [17]. Research by Birtel further associates empathy and contact-related self-efficacy with the quality of intergroup interaction [18], while the systematic review by Policardo emphasizes the importance of considering the quality and nature of contact experiences [19]. Although these studies examine different social groups and national contexts, they provide relevant theoretical insights for investigating how educational interaction may contribute to inclusive attitudes.

Junior high school education is particularly relevant to this inquiry because students are negotiating important aspects of personal identity, peer relationships, social belonging, and moral judgement during adolescence. Schools therefore provide opportunities to examine how attitudes toward religious and cultural differences develop through both instructional and interpersonal experiences. Güleç, through a synthesis of school-based studies, identifies contextual and developmental factors associated with religious tolerance and prejudice among children and young people [20]. School practices also influence which forms of diversity become visible within educational interactions. Boer shows that teachers and students report greater classroom attention to ethnic diversity than to socioeconomic differences, suggesting that inclusive education requires attention to multiple dimensions of social identity [21]. In the Indonesian context, Faridi and Mardiana examine inclusive religious education and the development of tolerance-related character across religious and non-religious schools. These findings support investigating inclusive student character not simply as a matter of accepting religious differences, but also as the expression of respect, fairness, empathy, and willingness to interact constructively with others [22].

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The internalisation of religious moderation values is especially relevant to the present study at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, Jepara, Indonesia, an institution selected for investigation because of its Al-Qur'an-based Islamic educational orientation. This context raises an important educational question: how can the strengthening of students' Qur'anic understanding and Islamic moral commitments be accompanied by the development of inclusive social attitudes? Studies of Islamic boarding schools demonstrate that religious values can be cultivated through educational experiences extending beyond formal instruction. Bahri, for example, identifies experiential learning, mentoring, and direct training as important approaches to moral leadership development in Indonesian pesantren [23]. Such findings offer a basis for investigating the potential roles of teacher guidance, educational interaction, religious routines, and school culture in value formation. Nevertheless, the specific forms and outcomes of these practices cannot be assumed to be identical across Islamic educational institutions. It is therefore necessary to examine how religious moderation is understood, introduced, negotiated, and enacted within the particular institutional environment of SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, including the extent to which students' everyday conduct reflects inclusive values.

To investigate these processes, the present study adopts the three-stage framework of value internalisation articulated by Muhaimin, Suti'ah, and Nur Ali, comprising value transformation, value transaction, and transinternalization. Value transformation refers to the initial communication of values through explanation, instruction, and the development of conceptual understanding. Value transaction involves reciprocal educational interaction through which teachers and students engage with values, respond to examples, and participate in activities that encourage their application. Transinternalization denotes a deeper process in which values become integrated into students' attitudes, dispositions, and patterns of behaviour, involving more than verbal acceptance or outward compliance. This framework is supported conceptually by scholarship on moral formation and role modelling. Sanderse argues that adolescents' moral development can involve active reflection on and emulation of significant role models, rather than passive imitation of teachers [24]. Henderson further examines the moral and educational significance of emulation in character formation [25]. These perspectives help explain why internalisation should be investigated through the relationship between instruction, reciprocal interaction, moral reflection, and observable conduct rather than through religious knowledge alone.

Existing scholarship has provided important insights into religious moderation curricula, institutional policies, Islamic educational materials, pedagogical practices, and the development of tolerance. However, these contributions do not, by themselves, explain how the successive processes of value transformation, value transaction, and transinternalization operate within the specific context of SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. The present study therefore addresses a context-specific and analytical gap by examining the relationship between educational strategies, everyday school practices, and the formation of inclusive student character through an integrated framework. The three stages of value internalisation are used to investigate educational processes, while the four indicators established by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs serve as a normative reference for interpreting expressions of religious moderation. This combination makes it possible to distinguish the communication of values from their interactive negotiation and their more sustained expression in students' everyday behaviour, without assuming that participation in school activities automatically results in internalisation.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyse how religious moderation values are internalised through educational strategies at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, Jepara, Indonesia, and how these processes are reflected in the development of inclusive student character. Specifically, it examines value transformation, value transaction, and

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transinternalization in relation to instructional practices, teacher–student interactions, religious activities, and the broader school environment. The central research question is: How are religious moderation values internalised through educational strategies at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong to develop inclusive student character? By examining these processes in an Al-Qur'an-based Islamic school, the study seeks to contribute context-specific empirical evidence to scholarship on Islamic education, religious moderation, and character development. It is also expected to offer practical insights into educational strategies that sustain students' religious commitments while encouraging tolerance, respect for differences, non-violence, and constructive participation in a pluralistic society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious Moderation in Islamic Education

Religious moderation is an important educational principle in pluralistic societies because it encourages individuals to maintain their religious commitments while respecting the rights, beliefs, and social identities of others. In Indonesia, religious education operates within a multicultural environment in which national identity, religious affiliation, and social relationships interact in shaping students' attitudes toward diversity. Harjatanaya explains that religious education in multi-religious Indonesia needs to be contextualised to promote unity without eliminating religious differences [26]. Similarly, Putra demonstrate that national and religious identification may have complex relationships with attitudes toward other social groups, indicating that strong religious identification does not automatically produce inclusive social orientations [27].

Religious tolerance is also shaped by the ways educational institutions communicate and interpret religious values. Mulya and Aditomo, in their study of religious tolerance education in Indonesia, identify the influence of nationalist and theological discourses in shaping students' understandings of tolerance [28]. Their findings suggest that religious moderation should not be limited to the transmission of normative concepts but should also be connected to students' interpretations of religious teachings and their experiences of social interaction. Therefore, Islamic education needs to provide learning experiences that integrate religious understanding, respect for differences, and responsible participation in a pluralistic society.

Integration of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education plays an important role in connecting religious knowledge with students' ethical development and social responsibilities. The integration of religious moderation requires more than incorporating tolerance-related concepts into instructional materials; it also involves the selection of learning objectives, teaching strategies, educational experiences, and assessment practices. Muis, through a systematic review of religious moderation in secondary Islamic education, identifies these dimensions as interconnected elements in developing a comprehensive educational approach [29].

The importance of educational content is also demonstrated by Alabdulhadi, who examines the representation of religious tolerance in secondary Islamic education textbooks [30]. The study indicates that the presence of tolerance-related material does not necessarily mean that educational content has adequately addressed all aspects of religious coexistence. In the Indonesian context, Zulkarnain identify a tendency for religious moderation education in several madrasahs to emphasise theoretical knowledge more than practical application [31]. These findings indicate that the

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effectiveness of religious moderation education needs to be examined through the relationship between instructional content, teacher-student interactions, institutional practices, and students' everyday experiences.

Furthermore, Mulya demonstrate that Indonesian Muslim pre-service teachers construct their understandings of religious tolerance through multiple and sometimes competing discourses. Güleç, through a mixed-method research synthesis, also identifies contextual and educational factors associated with religious tolerance and prejudice in school environments. Taken together, these studies suggest that the development of religious moderation requires educational practices that encourage critical reflection, meaningful dialogue, and the application of religious values in everyday social relationships.

Inclusive Student Character and Intergroup Relations

Inclusive student character refers to the development of attitudes and behaviours that enable students to respect differences, demonstrate empathy, cooperate with others, and participate constructively in diverse social environments. Such character development is particularly important during adolescence because students are forming their identities, negotiating peer relationships, and developing moral judgements. Consequently, schools provide an important environment for cultivating positive relationships and reducing prejudicial attitudes [32].

Research on intergroup contact provides relevant insights into the development of inclusive attitudes among adolescents. Reimer demonstrates that a large-scale contact-based intervention can reduce intergroup anxiety and increase perspective-taking among adolescents, although its effects are not equally evident across all dimensions of intergroup relations. Similarly, Yücel examine a multimodal intervention combining direct contact, shared activities, and socio-cognitive learning to improve relationships between local and refugee adolescents. These findings indicate that meaningful social interaction can contribute to the development of more constructive relationships across group boundaries.

The quality of interpersonal interaction is also important. Birtel identify dispositional empathy as a predictor of positive intergroup contact quality, partly through contact self-efficacy and efforts to establish relationships. Váradi further demonstrate that increased contact with members of other groups can weaken the influence of prejudicial peer norms on adolescents' attitudes. In addition, Policardo, through a systematic review, emphasize the importance of examining the quality, valence, and intimacy of inter-minority contact experiences rather than assuming that all forms of contact produce positive outcomes. Inclusive education also requires attention to different dimensions of social diversity. Boer et al. (2026) demonstrate that teachers and students report greater classroom attention to ethnic diversity than to socioeconomic differences. This finding suggests that inclusive student character should not be understood merely as acceptance of religious differences but should also involve respect for different social backgrounds, fairness, empathy, and constructive interpersonal relationships.

Value Internalisation and Moral Character Development

The development of inclusive student character requires educational processes that enable students to understand, interact with, and gradually embody the values communicated through religious education. In this study, value internalisation is examined through three interconnected stages: value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization [33]. Value transformation refers to the communication of values through instruction and explanation. Value transaction involves reciprocal interactions between educators and students through dialogue, habituation, and practical

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educational experiences. Value transinternalization represents a deeper process in which values become integrated into students' attitudes, dispositions, and everyday behaviour [34].

This perspective is consistent with research on moral education and role modelling. Adolescents actively develop their moral character through the emulation of individuals whom they consider meaningful role models. The educational significance of emulation as a moral virtue involves both moral understanding and virtuous action [35]. These perspectives indicate that the internalisation of religious moderation values should be investigated not only through students' knowledge of religious principles but also through their interactions, moral reflections, and observable conduct.

Research within Indonesian Islamic boarding schools also provides relevant institutional insights. Experiential learning, mentoring, and direct training contribute to the development of moral leadership capabilities in pesantren. Although moral leadership and religious moderation represent different analytical dimensions, this research highlights the importance of educational experiences extending beyond formal classroom instruction [36]. Accordingly, teacher guidance, role modelling, religious activities, daily habituation, and institutional culture may provide interconnected opportunities for value formation.

Based on these perspectives, the present study employs the three-stage internalisation framework to examine how religious moderation values are communicated, practised, and reflected in students' everyday behaviour at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. The framework provides an analytical basis for distinguishing the transmission of religious knowledge from the development of interpersonal attitudes and the more sustained expression of inclusive character.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the internalization of religious moderation values in developing inclusive student character at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, Jepara, Central Java, Indonesia. The qualitative case study approach was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of complex educational phenomena within their actual institutional and social contexts [37]. This design was considered appropriate for understanding how religious moderation values were introduced, practised, and internalised through classroom instruction, dormitory activities, and everyday social interactions. The research was conducted during the first semester of the 2026/2027 academic year. The research location was selected purposively because SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong has distinctive characteristics as an Al-Qur'an-based Islamic school situated in a dynamic suburban industrial area.

The research informants consisted of key educational stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of religious moderation values, including an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, a dormitory supervisor, and student representatives from Grades 8 and 9. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and passive participant observation. The interviews focused on the strategies employed by teachers and dormitory supervisors to introduce religious moderation values, the implementation of these values in educational activities, and their contribution to developing inclusive student character. Passive participant observation was conducted during PAI classroom learning and school religious activities to examine the implementation of religious moderation values through teaching practices, habituation, teacher–student interactions, and students' daily behaviour. The use of interviews, observations, and multiple sources of evidence is consistent with established case study procedures for developing a comprehensive understanding of phenomena in their natural settings [38].

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Secondary data were obtained through document analysis, including the school profile, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lesson plans, and records of student violations and achievements related to character development. These documents were examined to complement the interview and observation findings and to provide additional information about the institutional environment and educational practices at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. The combination of interviews, observations, and documentary evidence enabled the researcher to examine the research phenomenon from different perspectives and establish a more comprehensive understanding of the case [39].

The collected data were analysed using the interactive analytical model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three interconnected processes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and organising information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents according to the research focus on religious moderation and inclusive student character. Data display involved presenting the organised information in descriptive narratives and matrices to identify relationships between educational strategies, the stages of value internalisation, and students' inclusive behaviours. Conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the identified patterns and examining the consistency of emerging findings against the collected evidence. This systematic organisation, comparison, and interpretation of qualitative data is consistent with established approaches to rigorous qualitative data analysis [40].

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings, this study employed source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the PAI teacher, dormitory supervisor, and student representatives. Technique triangulation involved comparing the results of in-depth interviews, passive participant observations, and document analysis. These procedures were intended to examine the consistency of information and identify similarities or differences across the collected data. The use of triangulation and systematic verification is recognised as an important strategy for strengthening credibility, dependability, and confirmability in qualitative research [41]. Through these procedures, the study sought to establish credible and contextually grounded findings concerning the internalization of religious moderation values in developing inclusive student character at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong.

Table 1. Research Methodology and Data Collection Framework

Research Components	Description
Research Approach	Qualitative approach
Research Design	Case study
Research Location	SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, Jepara, Central Java, Indonesia
Research Period	First semester of the 2026/2027 academic year
Sampling Technique	Purposive selection of key informants
Research Informants	Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, dormitory supervisor, and student representatives from Grades 8 and 9
Primary Data	Information concerning the internalisation of religious moderation values and the development of inclusive student character
Interview Technique	In-depth interviews with the PAI teacher, dormitory supervisor, and student representatives

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Observation Technique	Passive participant observation of PAI classroom activities and school religious programmes
Secondary Data	School profile, PAI lesson plans, and student violation and achievement records related to character development
Data Collection Methods	In-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and document analysis
Data Analysis Model	Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model
Data Analysis Procedures	Data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification
Trustworthiness	Source triangulation and technique triangulation

Table 1 presents the methodological framework employed in this study to investigate the internalization of religious moderation values in developing inclusive student character at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. This research adopted a qualitative approach with a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the educational processes within their institutional context. The research was conducted during the first semester of the 2026/2027 academic year at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, Jepara, Central Java, Indonesia. The research informants were purposively selected based on their involvement in the implementation of religious moderation values, consisting of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, a dormitory supervisor, and student representatives from Grades 8 and 9. Data collection involved three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted to obtain information about the strategies used by teachers and dormitory supervisors to introduce and reinforce religious moderation values, as well as students' experiences in practising inclusive attitudes. Passive participant observation focused on PAI classroom learning activities and school religious programmes to examine how moderation values were implemented through educational interactions and daily practices. Meanwhile, document analysis involved examining the school profile, PAI lesson plans, and student violation and achievement records related to character development.

The collected data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. These procedures enabled the researcher to organise the collected information, identify relevant patterns, and interpret the relationship between educational strategies and the development of inclusive student character. Furthermore, the trustworthiness of the findings was strengthened through source triangulation by comparing information from different informants, and technique triangulation by comparing interview, observation, and documentary data. Overall, the methodological framework provided a systematic basis for examining the processes of value transformation, value transaction, and value internalisation within the educational environment of SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Institutional Context and the Implementation of Religious Moderation

SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong is an Islamic junior high school under the management of Yayasan Pendidikan Pondok Pesantren (YP3) Al Husna Mayong, located in Jepara, Central Java, Indonesia. The institution integrates the national education curriculum with Islamic boarding school programmes, including Qur'anic memorisation (*tahfidzul Qur'an*), classical Islamic studies (*kitab kuning*), and Arabic language learning. This

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educational arrangement provides a learning environment in which religious knowledge, moral development, and social interaction are incorporated into students' daily educational experiences.

The school's vision emphasises the development of graduates who are devoted to God, excel in knowledge, faith, and good deeds, and demonstrate commitment and responsibility in practising and upholding Islamic teachings. This vision is implemented through several institutional missions, including strengthening faith through learning, providing Islamic and general education, developing teacher competencies, practising Islamic teachings in everyday life, and preparing students for religious outreach and foreign language proficiency.

The integration of religious and national values is also reflected in the school's formal and dormitory environments. An interview with the dormitory supervisor revealed that students are encouraged to practice national values not only during formal school activities but also through their daily interactions in the boarding environment. The supervisor explained: "The educational activities at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, both in formal school and in the boarding environment, emphasise national values as reflected in the school's vision and mission. In particular, the dormitory represents a miniature of society, where students live alongside friends from different regions, customs, and cultural backgrounds. They also learn to apply national values in their interactions with various workers at the boarding school, including construction workers, cleaning staff, cooks, and waste management workers."

This finding indicates that religious moderation at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong is not implemented exclusively through formal religious instruction. Instead, it is incorporated into the broader institutional environment, where students encounter differences in regional origins, cultural backgrounds, social roles, and individual characteristics. The dormitory functions as a social learning environment in which students experience diversity through everyday relationships. To illustrate the daily routine that fosters inclusive values, students actively participate in structured communal learning sessions within the dormitory environment. This setting systematically encourages peer discipline, mutual understanding, and shared spiritual growth.



Figure 1. Daily Activity of Implementation of Religious Moderation at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong

Figure 1 illustrates the daily learning activity of students participating in structured religious moderation practice at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. Sitting together in a shared hall, students regularly engage in collective recitation and study sessions that cultivate

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communal solidarity, discipline, and a deeper appreciation for diverse social backgrounds within the school's integrated dormitory system.

Value Transformation: Internalising Religious Moderation through Islamic Religious Education

The first stage of value internalisation is value transformation, which involves communicating religious moderation principles through classroom instruction and the development of students' conceptual understanding. At SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, this process is primarily implemented through Islamic Religious Education (PAI), particularly through lessons on religious tolerance for Grade 8 students during the first semester.

Interviews with Grade 8 student representatives indicated that the topic of religious tolerance had been introduced at the beginning of the semester. One student explained: "At the beginning of the previous semester, we studied the chapter on tolerance. We understood religious tolerance as respecting other religions and not discriminating against people who have different religious beliefs." This response indicates that students had acquired an initial understanding of tolerance as an attitude of respect and non-discrimination toward people of different religious backgrounds. The learning process was supported by the PAI teacher through contextual teaching strategies that connected Islamic concepts with contemporary social realities.

The PAI teacher explained that religious moderation values were integrated into classroom learning through three approaches. First, the teacher contextualised Islamic learning materials by connecting religious topics with actual social situations. For example, when discussing Islamic jurisprudence, students were introduced to differences of opinion (*khilafiyah*) among Islamic legal schools (*madhhab*) to encourage them to understand differences without immediately judging or blaming others. Second, the teacher integrated the values of *tasamuh* (tolerance) and *tawassuth* (moderation), emphasising that religious commitment should not lead to hostility toward people with different opinions or beliefs. Third, reflective activities were introduced at the beginning or end of lessons through inspirational stories and contemporary social cases to encourage critical thinking and empathy.

The transformation of religious moderation values was also grounded in Qur'anic teachings. The PAI teacher identified several Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions as theological foundations for developing moderate attitudes among students:

1. Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2:143) introduces the principle of *ummatan wasathan*, emphasising the position of Muslims as a balanced and moderate community.
2. Q.S. Al-Hujurat (49:13) emphasises human diversity in terms of nations and tribes as an opportunity for mutual recognition and understanding (*lita'arafu*).
3. Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah (60:8) teaches justice and kindness toward people who do not fight Muslims because of religion or expel them from their homes.
4. Hadith narrated by Ahmad concerning the Prophet's mission to uphold a religion characterised by uprightness and tolerance (*al-hanifiyyah al-samhah*).

These religious references were used to establish a theological understanding that tolerance, justice, and respect for differences are compatible with Islamic teachings. The findings demonstrate that value transformation at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong involves both conceptual instruction and contextual interpretation of religious sources. Students are introduced to moderation not merely as an abstract concept but as a set of religious principles that can guide their understanding of social differences. To foster inclusive character, the school integrates routine daily activities where students gather

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collectively, internalizing core moral values through continuous habituation, structured peer guidance, and shared spiritual experiences within the school's learning environment.



Figure 2. Daily Activity of Value Transformation at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong

Figure 2 depicts male students participating in collective value transformation routines. Through habituation, active role modeling, and an inclusive culture, these shared activities effectively instill mutual respect, discipline, and moral integrity, thereby reinforcing religious moderation principles across the entire student body.

Value Transaction: Habituation, Role Modelling, and Inclusive School Culture

The second stage, value transaction, involves the practical application of religious moderation through reciprocal interaction between educators and students. At SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, this stage is implemented through daily habituation, teacher role modelling, classroom learning strategies, and the development of an inclusive school culture.

One of the main practices implemented in the dormitory environment is the 5S culture: *Senyum, Sapa, Salam, Sopan,* and *Santun* (smiling, greeting, offering salutations, behaving politely, and speaking courteously). The dormitory supervisor explained that students are encouraged to practice these behaviours toward everyone with whom they interact. Furthermore, school rules and disciplinary consequences are applied without discrimination based on students' backgrounds. Students who violate school regulations receive warnings and appropriate consequences regardless of their personal or social circumstances. This practice illustrates that religious moderation is reinforced through institutional consistency and everyday interpersonal conduct. Fair treatment and respectful communication become practical expressions of the values introduced in classroom instruction.

In formal classroom activities, the PAI teacher reported using two principal teaching methods to strengthen the internalisation of moderation values. The first is Case-Based Learning combined with group discussions. Students are presented with real social problems concerning diversity and discrimination and are encouraged to formulate solutions from the perspective of Islamic ethics. This approach provides opportunities for students to express their opinions, listen to different perspectives, and develop mutual respect.

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The second method is storytelling through exemplary accounts from Islamic history, particularly the Charter of Medina and the Prophet Muhammad's social interactions with Jewish and Christian communities. According to the teacher, these historical narratives provide meaningful examples of peaceful coexistence and respectful relationships for junior high school students.

The teacher also employs short documentary videos depicting interreligious harmony and the negative consequences of extremism. In addition, concept mapping (*mind mapping*) is used to help students distinguish between fundamental religious principles, particularly matters of faith and obligatory worship, and areas of social interaction (*muamalah*) in which tolerance and mutual respect are emphasised. The teacher further explained that the principle *lakum dinukum waliyadin* is introduced to demonstrate the importance of maintaining Islamic beliefs without compromising religious principles. Nevertheless, in social and humanitarian matters, students are encouraged to act fairly, politely, and respectfully toward everyone. Respect for differences among Islamic legal schools is also demonstrated through examples of variations in religious practices, such as the use of *qunut* during the dawn prayer, the wording of *tasyahud*, and the performance of *tarawih* prayers.

These findings indicate that value transaction occurs through the integration of instructional strategies and daily school practices. The combination of discussion, storytelling, audiovisual materials, habituation, and fair disciplinary practices creates opportunities for students to translate religious knowledge into social behaviour. To further demonstrate how theoretical concepts are translated into daily practice, students actively participate in routine educational gatherings. These sessions effectively integrate interactive discussion, storytelling, and structured guidance to strengthen core moral values.



Figure 3. Daily Activity of Value Transaction at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong

Figure 3 illustrates the daily activity of value transaction among male students during a structured instructional assembly at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. Listening attentively to the instructor, students internalize ethical principles and social behavior, demonstrating how active learning combined with habituation successfully reinforces religious moderation principles within the school's inclusive educational environment every day.

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Value Transinternalization: The Development of Inclusive Student Character

The third stage, value transinternalization, refers to the deeper integration of religious moderation values into students' attitudes, dispositions, and everyday behaviour. At SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, this process is reflected in students' growing awareness of respecting differences, avoiding discriminatory behaviour, and responding constructively to interpersonal conflicts.

Interviews with student representatives indicated that learning about tolerance had influenced their understanding of how to treat others. One student stated: "After studying the chapter on tolerance, we have come to understand better the importance of respecting others, showing consideration, and not looking down on other people." Another student explained that the values communicated by the PAI teacher were increasingly practised in everyday dormitory life, where students interacted with friends who had different personalities and characteristics.

A particularly important indication of the development of inclusive character emerged from students' responses to bullying. Carissa, a Grade 8 student, explained: "When we see a friend being bullied by another student, we have become wiser in responding to the situation. Those who mock or belittle others are advised and reminded of what our teacher has taught us: everyone has strengths and weaknesses, so we should never look down on others because everyone has their own strengths." This statement illustrates that students were beginning to apply the values of respect and empathy in their peer relationships. Rather than simply recognising bullying as inappropriate behaviour, the student described an active response involving advising and reminding peers to respect individual differences.

The PAI teacher also confirmed the importance of everyday role modelling in developing inclusive student character. According to the teacher, students were encouraged to reject hate speech, avoid expressions that demean other groups, and practice respectful communication through the principle of *qaulan karima* (speaking with noble and courteous words).

Furthermore, the teacher observed that inclusive attitudes had gradually emerged in interactions among students from different family backgrounds, personalities, academic abilities, and Qur'anic memorisation achievements. Students were reported to share resources, cooperate in group activities, and interact without forming exclusive social boundaries. Nevertheless, the development of inclusive character remains an ongoing process. The PAI teacher identified a particular challenge concerning students' understanding of religious diversity beyond their immediate educational environment. Because SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong operates within a relatively homogeneous Islamic and Qur'anic memorisation environment, students still require continuous guidance to connect their theoretical understanding of tolerance with the wider realities of a pluralistic society.

This empirical finding clearly demonstrates that value transinternalization has successfully begun to emerge in students' everyday interpersonal relationships, although its practical application to broader interreligious and social community contexts still requires further sustained educational support. To systematically illustrate the conceptual model, the overall process of developing inclusive student character relies on three sequential stages: value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization within the integrated formal and Islamic boarding school environment.

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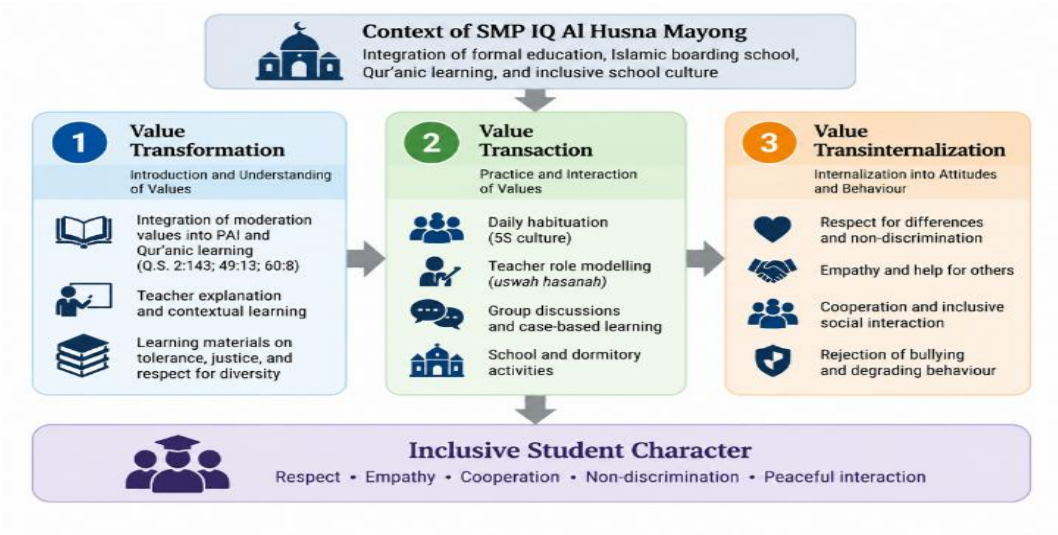


Figure 4. Internalisation of Religious Moderation Values in Developing Inclusive Student Character at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong

Figure 4 illustrates the process of internalising religious moderation values in developing inclusive student character at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong through three interconnected stages. The first stage, value transformation, introduces moderation principles through Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Qur'anic learning, and contextual teacher explanations, particularly concerning tolerance, justice, and respect for diversity. The second stage, value transaction, involves the practical application of these values through daily habituation (5S culture), teacher role modelling (*uswah hasanah*), group discussions, case-based learning, and school and dormitory activities. The third stage, value transinternalization, reflects the gradual integration of moderation values into students' attitudes and behaviours, as demonstrated by respect for differences, empathy, cooperation, non-discrimination, and rejection of bullying. These findings indicate that the integration of Qur'anic instruction, educational interactions, and daily school culture contributes to the development of inclusive student character while maintaining students' Islamic identity.

Religious Moderation as an Integration of Islamic Identity and Social Responsibility

The findings indicate that the implementation of religious moderation at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong does not require the separation of Islamic identity from inclusive social values. Instead, the school integrates both dimensions through its institutional vision, religious curriculum, Qur'anic learning, and everyday educational practices. The use of Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2:143), Q.S. Al-Hujurat (49:13), and Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah (60:8) demonstrates how Qur'anic teachings are interpreted as foundations for balance, recognition of diversity, justice, and peaceful coexistence. This approach positions religious moderation as an expression of Islamic ethical commitments rather than an external concept imposed on religious education.

This finding is consistent with Harjatanaya, who explains that religious education in Indonesia is shaped by negotiations between institutional policies, educational actors, and local cultural contexts. The study emphasises that the implementation of religious diversity cannot be understood merely as the direct application of national educational policies; it also depends on how schools translate these principles into their institutional practices [42]. In the context of SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, this contextualization is reflected in the integration of Qur'anic principles with national values and social

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interactions in the dormitory. Students are encouraged to maintain their Islamic identity while developing respectful relationships with people from different regional, cultural, and social backgrounds.

An important contribution of this finding is that inclusive character development within an Islamic school can begin through the recognition of everyday differences within its own educational community. Diversity is not limited to differences in religious affiliation but also includes family backgrounds, individual personalities, educational abilities, and social positions.

The Three Stages of Value Internalisation as an Educational Process

The findings provide contextual evidence for the application of the three-stage internalisation framework. The stages of value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization are reflected in interconnected educational practices at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. At the transformation stage, religious moderation values are introduced through PAI lessons, Qur'anic references, and explanations of tolerance. Students acquire an initial conceptual understanding of respecting others and avoiding discrimination. The teacher's use of contextual examples and differences in Islamic legal opinions also helps students recognise that diversity is part of religious and social life.

At the transaction stage, the values introduced through instruction are reinforced through actual educational interactions. The 5S culture, equal disciplinary treatment, case-based discussions, storytelling, and teacher role modelling provide opportunities for students to practice the principles of respect, fairness, and tolerance. These activities demonstrate that the internalisation of values requires consistency between what educators communicate and what students experience in their daily environment.

At the transinternalization stage, students begin to demonstrate these values through their own attitudes and actions. Their responses to bullying, willingness to advise peers, and cooperation with students of different backgrounds indicate that moderation values are gradually becoming part of their social behaviour. The relationship between role modelling and students' moral development is also discussed by Sanderse (2024), who explains that adolescents can cultivate their moral character through the emulation of meaningful role models. Importantly, moral development is not simply a passive process of copying teachers' behaviour. Students also interpret, reflect on, and apply the moral examples they encounter [43].

This perspective helps explain why the student responses at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong are particularly significant. Carissa's account of advising peers who engage in bullying demonstrates an active application of values rather than merely recalling classroom material. Nevertheless, these qualitative accounts should be understood as indications of developing moral awareness, not as definitive proof that internalisation has become permanent across all situations.

Everyday Social Interaction and the Formation of Inclusive Character

Another important finding concerns the role of everyday social interaction in strengthening inclusive student character. The dormitory environment provides opportunities for students to interact continuously with peers who have different personalities, family backgrounds, cultural origins, and academic abilities.

The practice of 5S, equal disciplinary treatment, group discussions, and collaborative activities contributes to an educational environment in which respect and fairness become everyday expectations. The students' reported responses to bullying also suggest that inclusive character involves more than avoiding discriminatory actions; it includes taking responsibility for protecting the dignity of others.

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This finding is relevant to research on intergroup relations among adolescents. Reimer found that a large-scale contact-based intervention among adolescents reduced intergroup anxiety and increased perspective-taking, although it did not significantly improve every dimension of intergroup relations [44]. Their findings demonstrate that positive social contact can support some aspects of inclusive attitudes but does not automatically eliminate prejudice or guarantee complete social cohesion.

Similarly, Yücel demonstrate the potential of combining direct interaction, shared activities, sports, and socio-cognitive learning to improve relationships between local and refugee adolescents. Their research highlights the importance of structured experiences that encourage cooperation and understanding across social boundaries. The experience at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong offers a related but contextually different perspective. Whereas these previous studies emphasise interaction across ethnic or refugee–local group boundaries, the present research identifies the importance of everyday interaction within an Islamic educational environment. Students develop inclusive attitudes through cooperation, fair treatment, and the recognition of differences among their peers.

Thus, the findings suggest that an inclusive school culture is developed not only through formal lessons about tolerance but also through repeated social experiences that enable students to practice respect and empathy.

Challenges of Developing Inclusivity in a Relatively Homogeneous Islamic Environment

Although the findings demonstrate positive indications of inclusive character development, they also reveal an important limitation. The relatively homogeneous Islamic and Qur'anic memorisation environment at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong provides strong opportunities for strengthening religious identity and internalising Islamic values. However, it may provide fewer direct opportunities for students to interact with people from different religious communities.

This situation creates a distinction between understanding religious tolerance conceptually and experiencing religious diversity through direct interaction. Students may understand the importance of respecting people of different religions through Qur'anic instruction, but they still require broader social experiences to develop confidence and competence in interacting across religious boundaries.

Reimer demonstrates that structured intergroup contact can contribute to reducing anxiety and strengthening perspective-taking among adolescents. Meanwhile, Yücel show that combining direct contact with cooperative activities and socio-cognitive learning can provide opportunities to improve intergroup relationships. These findings provide relevant implications for SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong. Religious moderation education could be strengthened through structured community engagement, social service activities, collaborative programmes with different community groups, and contextual discussions about religious diversity in Indonesian society. Such activities would complement the existing Qur'anic and Islamic learning programmes without weakening students' religious commitments.

The challenge identified in this research therefore does not indicate a failure of the school's religious moderation education. Rather, it highlights the need to extend students' learning experiences beyond the immediate school and dormitory environment so that their understanding of tolerance can be applied more confidently in wider social contexts. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the internalisation of religious moderation values at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong takes place through the integration of Qur'anic instruction, educational interaction, daily habituation, and students' social

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experiences. The three-stage internalisation framework provides a useful explanation of how religious moderation values move from conceptual understanding toward practical expressions of inclusive character. The study also highlights that strengthening Islamic identity and developing inclusive social attitudes can be complementary educational objectives, provided that religious learning is consistently connected to ethical conduct and meaningful social interaction.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the internalisation of religious moderation values at SMP IQ Al Husna Mayong, Jepara, Indonesia, is developed through three interconnected stages: value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization. These stages demonstrate how Qur'anic-based Islamic education can integrate religious commitment with the development of inclusive student character. First, value transformation is implemented through the integration of religious moderation principles into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Qur'anic learning. The use of Qur'anic references, particularly Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2:143), Q.S. Al-Hujurat (49:13), and Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah (60:8), provides a theological foundation for teaching balance, tolerance, justice, and respect for human diversity. Contextual learning also helps students understand that differences in religious opinions and social backgrounds should be approached with openness rather than prejudice. Second, value transmission is realised through daily habituation, teacher role modelling (*uswah hasanah*), and the development of an inclusive school culture. The implementation of the 5S culture, fair disciplinary practices, case-based learning, group discussions, and exemplary stories from Islamic history provides opportunities for students to practice moderation values in their everyday interactions. These practices demonstrate that religious moderation is strengthened when classroom instruction is consistently supported by institutional behaviour and educational relationships. Third, value transinternalization is reflected in the gradual development of students' inclusive attitudes and behaviours. The findings indicate that students increasingly demonstrate respect for differences, avoid looking down on others, cooperate with peers from different backgrounds, and respond constructively to bullying. These behaviours suggest that religious moderation values are beginning to extend beyond conceptual understanding into students' everyday social experiences. However, the study also identifies a continuing challenge related to the relatively homogeneous Islamic and Qur'anic memorisation environment of the school. Although students have developed an understanding of tolerance and respect for differences, they still require sustained guidance and broader social experiences to strengthen their ability to interact with people from different religious backgrounds in wider society. The main contribution of this study is its context-specific explanation of how religious moderation values are internalised through the integration of formal Islamic education, Qur'anic learning, dormitory activities, and everyday school culture. The findings emphasise that strengthening Islamic identity and developing inclusive social character are not contradictory educational objectives. Rather, a strong foundation in Qur'anic values can support the cultivation of tolerance, empathy, fairness, and peaceful social relationships when accompanied by consistent educational practices and meaningful social interactions. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions, particularly Al-Qur'an-based schools, are encouraged to strengthen contextual and interactive learning, maintain consistent teacher role modelling, and expand community-based social activities. Such efforts can help students apply the values of religious moderation not only within the school and dormitory environment but also in their broader social lives, while maintaining their Islamic faith and ethical commitments.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed to the development and completion of this research. The authors were involved in the conceptualisation of the study, research methodology, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the findings. The preparation of the manuscript, including the original draft, review, and editing, was also undertaken collaboratively. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest, whether financial or non-financial, that could have influenced the research, its findings, or the publication of this manuscript.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The authors acknowledge that artificial intelligence tools were used solely to support language editing, grammar checking, academic readability, and sentence refinement. AI tool did not influence research design, analysis, interpretation, findings, or conclusions in the manuscript.

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