Religious moderation without context: critical analysis of Islamic Education textbooks junior high school in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the value of religious moderation articulated in the textbooks on Islamic Education (PAI) and Morals for Junior High School. A qualitative approach was used using content analysis techniques which carried out by unitizing, sampling, recording/coding, reducing, abductively inferring, and narrating the samples. Furthermore, data validity was conducted through a focus group discussion technique involving experts in the field of moderation and teachers using textbooks. The results found that the content of religious moderation values has not been given proper space in PAI textbooks, although it is considered to be one of the gateways for the spread of radicalism in schools. This tendency is evidently seen in the following, first, the value of anti-violence being surpassed by normatively based dominance of personal morals and fiqh of worship. Second, national values are still neglected, meaning that the concept of islah and deliberation in the arguments cited for this theme has not been further elaborated. Third, the narrative of tolerance presented is very limited. Fourth, the description of local culture is almost forgotten. For example, the Walisongo's contextualization of local culture with Islam, has not been used to elaborate the value of moderation. Therefore, these findings indicate that there is an urgent need to strengthen the values of religious moderation in PAI textbooks used at Junior High School level in Indonesia.
Keywords:
Islamic Religious Education; Islamic Textbook; Religious Moderation

Abstrak: *Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis nilai moderasi beragama yang diartikulasikan dalam buku teks PAI dan Budi Pekerti SMP. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik content analysis terhadap buku teks yang digunakan di SMP. Tahapan analisis dilakukan melalui unitizing, sampling, recording/coding, reducing, abductively inferring, dan narrating. Keabsahan data dilakukan dengan teknik focus group discussion dengan melibatkan pakar bidang moderasi dan guru pengguna buku teks. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa meski mengutip ayat-ayat al-Qurán yang relevan, namun muatan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama dalam buku teks PAI belum memperoleh ruang yang memadai, bahkan diasumsikan sebagai salah satu pintu masuk penyebaran paham radikal di sekolah. Kecenderungan ini nampak pada: pertama, nilai anti kekerasan terungguli oleh dominasi akhlak personal dan fikih ibadah yang dijelaskan secara normative; Kedua, nilai kebangsaan masih terabaikan. Konsep ishlah dan musyawarah dalam dalil yang dikutip untuk tema ini belum diperdalam penjelasannya; Ketiga, narasi toleransi disajikan sangat terbatas; dan keempat, deskripsi kebudayaan lokal nyaris terlupakan. Kontekstualisasi kebudayaan lokal dengan Islam yang dilakukan Walisongo misalnya tidak dimanfaatkan untuk mengelaborasi nilai moderasi. Implikasi penelitian menunjukkan adanya kebutuhan mendesak penguatan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama dalam buku-buku teks PAI yang digunakan pada tingkat SMP di Indonesia.*

Kata Kunci:
Buku Teks; Moderasi Beragama; Pendidikan Agama Islam

INTRODUCTION
The increasing prevalence of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism associated with Islamic teachings, has led to several criticisms of Islamic Education. According to CONVEY Indonesia-PPIM, radical ideologies subtly infiltrate schools through Islamic literature, despite the inclusion of tolerance in Islamic Education and Character-Building textbooks. Teachers' perceptions and interpretations of the content may not always align with tolerance and may lead to the dissemination of intolerant views. Therefore, Islamic Education textbooks are among the gateways for the spread of radicalism in schools. Similarly, Jauhar Fuad stated that radicalism enters through textbooks, such as the Islamic Education subject for eleventh-grade high school students, which includes the statement that "people who worship other than Allah or non-Muslims can be killed."

A study by the Maarif Institute showed that radical values infiltrate schools through alumni who participate in extracurricular programs, teachers indoctrinating students in and out of lessons, and school policies that often provide opportunities for intolerant and radical groups to guide students in religious strengthening. Islamic Education in public and Islamic schools plays a crucial role in shaping conservative or moderate attitudes. However, several studies suggest that teachers tend to be too normative and lack contextualization in delivering religious material. Fuad also emphasizes that radical ideologies begin to enter through textbooks, such as the Islamic Education subject for eleventh-grade high school students, which contains the statement that "people who worship other than Allah or non-Muslims can be killed."

Several studies show a growing trend of radicalization among academics. A survey by the Institute for Islamic Studies and Peace (LaKIP) between October 2010 and January 2011 found that almost half of the students surveyed agreed with radical actions. Additionally, 25% and 21% of students and teachers felt that Indonesia's state ideology, Pancasila, was no longer relevant. Worryingly, 84.8% and 76.2% of students and teachers agreed with the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia. The survey also found that 52.3% and 14.2% of students and teachers were in favor of violence for the sake of religious solidarity. Another questionnaire, distributed by the Islamic Religious Extension Communication Forum (FKPAI) in Sleman to all public and private high schools in 2019, revealed that nearly 60% and 30% of high schools and teachers were exposed to radical ideology, respectively (Dinnata, 2020). In a study on Malaysian Muslim students by Ebrahimi, 43.8% of the respondents agreed with takfiri ideology, 27% believed that Islamic law should be implemented in the state system, and 60.9% agreed that killing non-Muslims is part of Islamic teachings (Mansoureh Ebrahimi, et al. 2021: 71-76).

Some studies suggest that Islamic education in Indonesia follows a moderate religious paradigm. For example, Futaqi (2018) proposed a four-level approach to integrating moderate religious values into the curriculum, which includes the contributive, objective, transformative, and social action approaches.

Fuad and Susilo (2019) found that there was a mainstreaming of moderate Islam at the Islamic University of Malang. This was achieved through a policy established by the rector and the admission of new students through specific programs. The development of the Islamic Education course curriculum, which is taught over six semesters, also involved mainstreaming moderate religious values. The teaching process involved discussion and the use of various learning media and the integration of knowledge with practice and general knowledge with religious knowledge.

Numerous studies have been conducted to enhance religious moderation. For instance, Manshur (2020) used literature-based learning to improve students' understanding and attitude towards religious moderation. The results showed that literature-based learning significantly improved students' comprehension of the importance of religious moderation, fostered their moderation, developed moderate religious behaviour, created genuine ethics in a diverse society, and improved friendships between people of different religions. Similarly, Ajib Hermawan (2020), Herman (2020), and Husnul Khotimah (2020) highlighted the significance of formal and hidden curricula in instilling religious moderation. Herman suggested a model of religious moderation-based learning in schools that includes building and developing universal values of religious moderation, understanding and internalizing the value of differences, building spirituality and rationality with social reality, cultivating the attitude of rahmatan lil 'alamin in social reality, and applying preventive, corrective, and curative actions against radical, extreme, and exclusive attitudes.

Previous studies did not comprehensively analyse the citation of Qur'an verses in the Islamic Education and Character-Building textbook for junior high school. Instead, they focused on action and descriptive qualitative studies on the implementation of moderation in educational institutions, as well as the development of teaching materials based on religious moderation. This study aimed to analyse the articulation of moderation values in the interpretation of the material and through the citation of verses in the Islamic Education and Character-Building textbook for junior high school. Empirical trends show that although relevant Qur'an verses are cited, the content of religious moderation values in the textbook has not received adequate attention. Furthermore, it is assumed to be an entrance to the spread of radical ideas in schools. This trend is evident in several ways, including the value of anti-violence is overshadowed by the dominance of personal morals and normative explanations of fiqh, the neglected value of nationalism, where the concepts of islah and musyawarah in the cited verses for this theme have not been deeply explained, a very limited tolerance narrative; and almost forgotten local culture.

RESEARCH METHOD
This is a qualitative literature review study that used documentation techniques to collect data. The techniques included tracing and collecting citations of verses found in the Islamic Education and Character Building textbooks for seventh, eighth, and ninth grades of Junior High School published by the Ministry of

Education and Culture in 2017, as well as identifying and analyzing discourses from books, papers or articles, magazines, journals, websites (internet), or other information related to the study title to search for variables in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, and so on that are related to the values of religious moderation in learning resources and the education world.

Data were analyzed using the content analysis technique from the Krippendorff perspective. This technique shows that the text does not have a single meaning, but has various meanings depending on the diversity of perspectives used. The stages of data analysis included unitizing, sampling, recording/coding, reducing, abductively inferring, and narrating, as described by Krippendorff in 2004. The implementation of these stages was carried out as follows:

Table 1. Analysis Stages on Islamic Education Textbook

No	Stage	Activity
1	*Unitizing*	Collecting Islamic Education and Character-Building textbooks at the junior high school level
2	*Sampling*	Determining the sample of books used as the study object
3	*Recording/coding*	Mapping of chapters and sub-sections of Islamic Education and Character-Building textbook which contain verses of religious moderation for comparison between books and authors
4	*Reducing*	Data specifications following the study focus, which are related to the quoting and meaning of verses of religious moderation
5	*Inferring*	Interpretation of specific data using relevant theories, both the suitability of the quotations and the meaning of the verses used
6	*Narrating*	The abstraction and reflection of the analysis results following the study focus

Validity was tested using a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involving experts in the field of moderation and interpretation from the State Islamic University of Mataram and practitioners who use the Islamic Education and Character-Building textbook. Specifically, these were teachers at the State Junior High School 2 Mataram and 1 Batulayar, West Lombok. The FGD was held to capture the responses of the invited participants to the findings.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The mapping of moderation values, used in Islamic Education and Character Building textbooks, includes the four indicators of religious moderation formulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These indicators include 1) national commitment, demonstrated by acceptance of the principles of the state ideology based on Pancasila and the constitution, 2) tolerance, shown by respect

for differences and giving space for others to have their own beliefs, express their opinions, and value equality and cooperation, 3) anti-violence, demonstrated by rejection of any actions that use violent means, either physically or verbally, to pursue desired changes, and 4) acceptance of values, evidenced by accepting local traditions and cultures in religious behaviour, as long as they do not contradict the core teachings of religion (Pendis, 2021).

These indicators are consistent with the meaning of religious moderation in the Qur'an, which is replete with messages about religious moderation. Several terms in the Qur'an have the same substance, such as al-'adl which is mentioned 28 times (Hanafi, 2010), al-muqtashid mentioned 5 times (Umar, 2002), al-wazn mentioned 28 times (Umar, 2002), and al-qist mentioned 25 times (Hanafi, 2010). Meanwhile, the word al-wasath is mentioned 5 times (Al-Baqi, 1981). Some forms of using the term "wasath" in the Qur'an indicate that, although used in different contexts, it has a positive connotation and refers to the meaning of "middle", "just", and "good choice". Therefore, moderate individuals are those who always remain in the middle, do not take sides, do not behave extremely, are fair to anyone, spread goodness wherever they are, and are among the chosen ones (Basri, 2019). This study yielded several findings, including that the four indicators of religious moderation formulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs align with the meaning of religious moderation in the Qur'an. Additionally, several terms in the Qur'an have the same substance as religious moderation, including al-'adl, al-muqtashid, al-wazn, al-qist, and al-wasath. Moderate individuals remain in the middle, do not take sides, are fair to anyone, and spread goodness.

Table 2. Islamic Religious Education Materials in Junior High School following the 2013 Curriculum

No	Grade VII (Ahsan, 2014)	Grade VIII (Ahsan M, 2014)	Grade IX (Sumiyati, 2015)
1	Closer to Allah, by knowing *Asmaul Husna*	Believe in Allah's books	Believing in the last day (Doomsday)
2	Live quietly with honesty, trust, and *istiqamah*	Abstaining from drinking, gambling, and fighting	Be honest and keep promises
3	If everything is clean, life becomes comfortable	Prioritizing honesty and upholding justice	Respecting and obeying parents and teachers
4	The beauty of togetherness within the congregation	Closer to Allah by practising *sunnah* prayers	*Zakat fitrah* and *zakat mal*
5	History of the Prophet Muhammad	The calmer soul with lots of prostrations	Hajj and Umrah Pilgrimage
6	With knowledge everything becomes easy	Science development during the Umayyad period	Islam reconciles the Archipelago

7	Believe in Angels	Humble, and thrifty	Optimistic, Endeavor, and *Tawaqal*
8	Empathy, and respect	Characteristics of the Messengers	*Qada* and *Qadar*
9	Sincere, patient, and forgiving	Respecting and obeying parents and teachers	Manners, Courtesy, and Shame
10	Friday prayer	Be kind and do good deeds	Sacrifice
11	*Jama'* and *Qashar* Prayers	Fast	Islam in the Archipelago
12	History of Khulafaurrasidin	Halal food	Foster togetherness with tolerance and respect
13		Knowledge development during the Abbasiyah period	

Description: The distribution of Themes in the Islamic Education and Character Building Textbook for Junior High Schools (Ahsan, 2014, Ahsan M, 2014, Sumiyati, 2015)

Table 1 shows that the Islamic Education textbook focuses mainly on moral and fiqh content. Specifically, the moral material primarily emphasizes personal morals. Various normative explanations are provided for topics such as honesty, istiqamah, sincerity, patience, forgiveness, humility, wisdom, frugality, abstaining from alcohol, cleanliness, and good dress. Conversely, the fiqh materials included are only minimally related to religious moderation and anti-violence.

One moral theme that recurs throughout the textbook is honesty, with Chapter Two of the grade VII textbook discussing the topic of "Let's Behave Honestly, Let's Behave Trustworthy and Istiqamah" (Ahsan, 2014). The verses cited from Surah An-Nisa [4]: 58, Surah Al-Anfal [8]: 27, Surah Al-Mukminun [23]: 8, and Surah Al-Ahqaf [46]: 13 are relevant to the topic of moderation. However, the discussion in this chapter does not relate to moderation, despite istiqamah's potential to be developed for moderation issues. Istiqamah, a continuation of a person's declaration of faith, provides an entry point for discussing how believers should maintain consistent good behaviour towards other humans and creatures of Allah in the world. The grade VIII textbook also discusses the topic of honesty in relation to fair behaviour (Ahsan M, 2014), while the topic of keeping promises is revisited in grade IX, citing QS. Al-Ahzab [33]:70 (Sumiyati, 2015). This study underscores the significance of honesty as a manifestation of taqwa, or fear of Allah, fear of making mistakes, and sins.

The interpretation of the qaul sadid concept is a starting point for elaborating on religious moderation. Ar-Razi interprets qaul sadid as honest (ash-shidq) and true (al-haq), with the context of the verse commanding believers to be mindful (taqwa) through good deeds (khair) and to speak with honesty (ash-shidq) and truth (al-haq) (Ar-Rāzi, 1981). Similarly, Zamakhsyari explains that qaul sadid means speaking the truth (al-haq) accurately (neither more nor less) and with respect for the person spoken to. This is because speaking truthfully is the pinnacle of goodness (al-khair). Therefore, believers should always guard their tongues and speak the truth (Az-Zamakhsyari, 2009). Qaul sadid also refers to speech that accurately reflects what is in one's heart, that is true (ash-shawab and al-haq). Such speech is direct and to the point like an arrow hitting its target, indicating goodness rather than evil or wrongdoing ('Asyūr, 1984). A more comprehensive understanding of qaul sadid help students comprehend that truthful, honest, and accurate speech is the key to treating others well and preventing misunderstandings that can trigger unnecessary anarchic actions.

The textbook for grade VII focuses on the theme of manners towards parents and teachers, with a verse from Surah Al-Baqarah [2] presented as a reference (Ahsan, 2014). However, the theme of respecting teachers only includes a verse from Surah Al-Mujadilah [58]:11. In grade VIII, the discussion on manners towards parents and teachers is covered in chapter nine, with verses from Surah An-Nisa' [4]:36, Surah Al-Isra' [17]:23, and Surah Luqman [31]:14-15 presented. However, there are no verses discussing manners towards teachers (Ahsan M, 2014). The topic of obeying parents in grade IX is linked to the behaviour of honesty, which is discussed again to foster a moderate attitude (Sumiyati, 2015). If this theme is expanded upon, Surah Al-Isra' [17]:23 and Luqman [31]:14-15 can guide moderation values.

The author of the book explains the essence of the two verses as follows: 1) Being dutiful to parents is crucial for entering heaven. Children who are dutiful to their parents will have the doors of heaven opened for them by Allah. 2) Being dutiful to parents is part of striving in the way of Allah, which has a great reward in Allah's eyes. 3) Being dutiful to parents can expiate major sins. Children's dutifulness to their parents can lead to the forgiveness of their sins by Allah (Ahsan M, 2014). These three points highlight the importance of the relationship between children and parents in a theological context, with the focus being on gaining rewards and heaven. However, the social relationship between children and parents, which involves psychological, sociological, educational, and economic needs, is not given much attention. The relationship between children and parents is not only a theological one but also a sociological one, with the family being the smallest institution in a society where reciprocal relationships occur.

The spirit embodied in these verses is profound and has great relevance in fostering religious moderation among students. The correlation between worshipping Allah and honouring one's parents is inseparable, as illustrated by

the letter "wawu athaf." Ar-Razi elucidated that the continuous obligation to worship Allah and be kind to parents stems from the fact that the ultimate purpose of human existence is the creation of Allah, while the presence of parents is the external reason for the existence of children. Therefore, the directive is primarily aimed at fulfilling the true reason, followed by the external one. The existence comprises both the eternal and temporal, and thus humans are obligated to worship and glorify Allah and show compassion to His creatures. Parents, because of living for their children, deserve to be loved the most. However, gratitude to Allah is the ultimate form of appreciation for all blessings. Similarly, showing gratitude to His creations is also an acknowledgement of His benevolence. Being good to Allah and one's parents translate to being kind to all of His creatures, strengthening the significance of religious moderation (Ar-Razi, 1981).

The theme of ethics, such as optimism, effort, reliance on Allah, good assumptions, righteous deeds, and modesty, is supported by evidence from the Qur'an and Hadith. The quoted verse from Ali Imran [3]:159 is well-explained with at least four Islamic moderation values, including tolerance, democracy, non-extremism, and courtesy. Unfortunately, these values do not reflect the current reality of inter-group religious interactions among Muslims, and between Muslims and non-Muslims. There is a growing tendency towards violence in the name of religion, radicalism, ethnicity, race, and inter-group bullying, even in schools, and the emergence of terrorism. Therefore, the message conveyed in the above verse is highly pertinent and should be disseminated urgently.

The material on Islamic law in the Book of Islamic Education and Character Building for grade VII is presented in chapter four, which focuses on congregational prayer. The discussion does not include any verses. Congregational prayer is a relevant theme for promoting moderate attitudes because it strengthens the sense of togetherness and equality within the group, while also highlighting the strength of the congregation, which may consist of various sects and tendencies. Chapter Nine focuses on Friday prayer, and the verse quoted is from al-Jumu'ah [62]: 9 (Ahsan, 2014). However, this verse does not explain religious moderation. It is possible to develop an explanation that emphasizes how to conduct Friday prayer while still respecting other worshipers around the mosque.

The textbook for grade VIII discusses prostration, quoting a hadith rather than verses from the Qur'an. Nonetheless, there are many verses in the Qur'an about prostration, such as QS. al-Hijr [15]:98, QS. an-Nahl [16]:49, and al-Hajj [22]:77, which explain that all creatures prostrate to Allah (Ahsan M, 2014). The context is appropriate for developing the value of humility in students and highlighting the importance of not being arrogant in front of Allah. This awareness can lead to greater respect for all of Allah's creatures, including fellow human beings, regardless of their religion, race, or skin colour. Chapter eleven focuses on fasting, while the twelfth discuss halal and haram. Both themes offer great potential for integrating moderation values into religious teaching. For

instance, promoting a spirit of tolerance and anti-violence in students through these two themes can be a meeting point between fiqh and moderation values in religion.

The discussion of Qurban and Aqiqah, Zakat, and Hajj in the textbook for grade IX provides a more appropriate context for articulating moderation values in religion (Sumiyati, 2015). The normative evidence and explanations presented prioritize the impression of etiquette, but there has not been a good elaboration between the content of the evidence and the strengthening of students' attitudes towards religious moderation. Ar-Razi explained the content of the verse QS. al-Baqarah [2]:83, emphasizing that worship alone is not enough without also doing good to parents, relatives, orphans, and the poor, speaking kindly, and performing prayers and Zakat. This verse does not imply a requirement to do good to only certain parties and not others based on religious or racial differences (Ar-Rāzi, 1981). The gentle, non-violent attitude embodied by the Prophet in this verse should be internalized by students to anticipate various forms of violence, whether verbal or physical. The phenomenon of school brawls, the destruction of places of worship, the expulsion of religious leaders, the disruption of religious services, and other acts of violence continue to occur today.

Neglected National Values

The content related to nationality and civic issues is extremely limited in the textbook, almost non-existent. The only theme related to nationality is "Islam reconciles the Archipelago" in grade IX. Although this theme is a meeting point, there is no mention of the rights and obligations of citizens. In the discussion of Hajj and Umrah in grade IX, Arief Nur Rahman Al-Aziz et al. briefly describe the issue of unity as one of the derivatives of national values. The quoted verse is QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:10, which emphasizes that believers are brothers and they should reconcile and fear Allah to receive mercy.

Despite being brief and only placed in the "pearls of wisdom" column, compared to other explanations of other verses, the message of moderation is more clearly mentioned. Al-Aziz et al. explained that in religion, nationhood, and homeland, unity among Muslims and people of different religions should be maintained. Muslims should maintain unity and reconcile in case of disputes. QS. Al-Anfal [8]:1 is quoted to reinforce this message, which emphasizes that all Muslims are brothers, regardless of their skin colour, language, or country, but Islam unites them in faith and piety (Al-Aziz, Arief Nur Rahman Although, 2018).

In explaining the verse, there are two essential aspects to emphasize. The first is horizontal unity, which includes internal unity among people of different religions, connecting it to national unity. The second is the internal unity of Muslims, with faith as the unifying aspect. However, the Islamic Education textbook briefly touches upon these values in the sub-discussions of Hajj and Umrah and Friday prayer. The author does not comprehensively elaborate on the connection between unity values and national living capital. The textbook's more prominent explanation is on the aspect of fiqh.

The Hijrah topic in grade VII substantially covers national values without quoting a specific verse. The Prophet formulated the Medina Charter to achieve national unity in pluralistic Medina. However, less contextual explanations are also found in the explanation of QS. 'Ali Imran [3]: 159. This verse emphasizes the importance of consultation as one of the pillars of nationhood and statehood, though the depth of explanation is still overlooked. Currently, there is a tendency to strengthen identity politics, clash between Islam and the state, discourse on the establishment of an Islamic state, and views on the government as a thogut ruler. This tendency is beginning to be instilled in students in the school environment. Therefore, the message of the above verse is very relevant and urgent to be expanded upon.

Very Limited Tolerance Narrative

Studies on Islamic Education teaching materials for schools reveal that although certain sections of the textbook promote tolerance and present different Islamic perspectives, the overall content is problematic. Rather than respecting and promoting diversity in Islamic perspectives, the materials endorse a singular perspective of Islam. Some texts even distort and demonize various perspectives and religious practices. The textbook should provide a comprehensive view and clarify sensitive concepts such as infidels, polytheists, and khilafah. However, it instead presents an exclusive perspective without any critical analysis. Some parts of the textbook exhibit prejudice against non-Muslims, specifically Jews and Christians (PPIM, 2016). This may result from the disregard for the value of wasathiyah Islam, a moral structure reflected not only in individual behaviour but also in the Muslim community and national life (Kamali, 2015).

Textbooks, including Islamic Education materials, play a crucial role in shaping values and ideologies. Michael W. Apple asserts that textbooks are instrumental in constructing the ideology of specific societal groups. Textbooks are not only cultural artefacts but also cultural-political instruments that connect cultural vision and power (Apple, 1992). Nonetheless, the accessibility of Islamic readings and religious activities in schools by outsiders may lead to the development of intolerance among students.

The Islamic Education textbook for junior high school addresses the issue of tolerance through topics such as the Prophet's Hijrah, the Strategy of Da'wah in Medina, and the Struggle Values of the Prophet in Medina. The discussion revolves around the explanation that there were three major religions among the people of Medina. To establish harmonious relationships, tolerance, and a conflict-free environment, an agreement was reached as the foundation of harmony, demonstrated by the creation of the Medina Charter, though this discussion lacks cited references.

In their textbook, Muhammad Ahsan and Sumiyati present the material on tolerance in a specific sub-topic within the theme of "Nurturing Togetherness with Tolerance and Appreciating Differences." Before citing several relevant verses, this theme first explains the importance of tolerance in daily life by providing empirical examples of conflicts related to ethnicity, religion, and race.

Dear students who love peace and harmony, among you there should be differences in opinion. Perhaps you come from different ethnic groups but these should not be used as a reason to fight. Look at the inter-ethnic riots in Ambon, religious conflicts in Poso, and conflicts between football fans. These conflicts, riots, and fights occur due to the lack of tolerance and respect for the differences of others (Sumiyati, 2015).

The verse that helps in developing a tolerant attitude towards others is QS al-Hujurat [49]:13. It was initially revealed as a criticism of the tradition prevailing at that time, which glorified lineage or descent. The Quraysh tribe considered lineage to be more prestigious than wealth. The Arabs believed that wealth could be depleted, but lineage should not be cut off or erased, hence glorified. These characteristics were the seeds of disputes and hostilities among human beings. The verse serves as the foundation for tolerance by erasing differences in lineage, race, class, and nation. The differences among human beings are solely based on their obedience (piety) to their Creator (Allah). This is known as at-ta'aruf, which means eliminating pride (at-tafākhur), denial (at-tanākur), and mutual humiliation, and has an impact on mutual assistance (Ar-Rāzi, 1981).

The concept of at-ta'āruf requires each party to actively understand the identity of others and respect each other. Tension arises because each party does not want to understand that everyone has their own identity that should be respected. This is the essence of tolerance, which fosters a moderate religious attitude among students. The verse should be presented as a contextual model of how holy verses live in Indonesian society, containing values that respect differences in ethnic backgrounds, race, religion, gender, and language. The verse conveys the message to know each other. Therefore, the strengths and weaknesses of each individual and group can be understood.

The Islamic values of tolerance, respect, and peace embodied by the Wali Songo in spreading Islam can be linked to contemporary preaching practices. The rise of conservatism and sectarianism in contemporary preaching highlights the need to reflect on the practices of the Wali Songo. In case the values of moderation and tolerance are not supported by quotes from the Qur'an, they lack normative backing. It is vital to use verses from the Qur'an to reinforce the understanding and internalization of these values. This is because the Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic Education and Character Building. Similarly, when examining the theme "Exploring Islamic Traditions in the Archipelago," which involves the diversity of ethnic groups, religions, languages, and cultures, including the recognition of Hindu and Buddhist religions before Islam, it is important to reference Qur'an verses to support the discussion.

The diversity of customs and traditions in the archipelago has implications for the diversity of Islamic expressions in Indonesia. The emergence of the term "syncretism" in describing the pattern of Islam Nusantara signifies the strong influence of culture. However, debates about superstition, myths, and innovations (bid'ah) also indicate differences in perspectives regarding the

encounter between local culture and Islam. Since the reform movement of 1998, the issue of bid'ah has gained prominence with the increasing openness of transnational Salafi or Wahhabi ideologies in preaching. This situation often leads to social tension and internal conflicts among Muslims in various regions. In this context, specific studies and reviews of relevant verses are essential to be included in the Islamic Education and Character-Building book theme.

The Qur'an quotes and contents presented earlier are relevant to the sub-topics discussed. However, the interpretation of the verses has not fully addressed the value of tolerance comprehensively. Additionally, the author appears to overlook the issues of moderate Islamic values concerning the empirical lives of Muslims today based on the data presented. The increasingly complex dynamics of religious life and relationships, both internally within the Muslim community and externally with non-Muslims, have not received sufficient attention and are even neglected.

Description of Almost Forgotten Local Customs

The content provides a study of local wisdom, though with very limited descriptions. At least two themes are specifically relevant to the issue of local traditions, specifically "The Presence of Islam in Peace-making in the Archipelago" and "Islam in the Archipelago". These two themes are taught in grade IX. In the textbook written by Muhammad Ahsan and Sumiyati, there is a theme about "The Presence of Islam in Peacemaking in the Archipelago". Both the theme and its material are very rich with the values of moderate Islam. The description explains:

> While trading, these Islamic preachers came to the Archipelago to spread their teachings. Their arrival was warmly welcomed and well-received because their way of spreading Islam was peaceful and polite, not through violence. In Islam, there is no compulsion in religion because what is right and wrong is already clear.
> They had a polite attitude, were physically and spiritually clean, charitable, maintained good relations, cooperated, and collaborated with the people of the Archipelago. Importantly, they conveyed Islam wisely, without forcing or belittling others. Islam teaches its followers to help each other, making it easy for the people to accept its teachings (Sumiyati, 2015).

Religious moderation is founded on three main pillars for promoting tolerance, specifically the role of government, education, and local wisdom (Fakhruddin, 2020). In multicultural societies, it is essential to consider existing social realities and to apply local wisdom as a key element for cultivating tolerance. Cultural products often contain educational values that help individuals search for their identity as social beings. Accepting all differences requires certain things, including the application of local wisdom passed down from previous generations.

Local wisdom is a more sustainable and dynamic approach to promoting religious moderation. The use of local wisdom as the basis for non-formal

education in religious moderation is often regulated through cultural ethics. Society's cultural ethics largely govern how individuals should behave based on established social norms related to speech and behaviour. Psychologically, ethical behaviour is seen as proportional and is either rewarded or punished. When someone behaves well, they are rewarded with acceptance in the community. In case one behaves poorly, they will not be accepted. Homans suggests that material or non-material exchanges are always present in social communities to gain love and mutual respect among individuals (Scott, 2012).

In a multicultural society, implementing religious moderation within the framework of local culture helps live in harmony, specifically in an increasingly globalized world (Groh, 2018). By being sensitive to existing local cultures and traditions, no one feels excluded or marginalized. May and Aikman (2003) have shown that local cultures with strong values of religious tolerance need to be revived in educational spaces such as schools and families. This will help promote religious moderation and foster greater understanding and acceptance among different cultures and religions.

In Islamic education, it is crucial to comprehend the characteristics of a society deeply connected to religious law and local culture. Islam has a philosophical framework that promotes brotherhood among people through the maintenance of moral values. Being a religion of peace, Islam does not differentiate between the sacred and secular aspects of life. Its holistic belief system encompasses philosophical, political, and social principles adapted through traditions within local communities. This belief is interpreted as a humanistic religious tradition based on the Qur'an and Hadith that aims to build individuals and communities (Samir, 2022), including religious moderation that promotes love and cooperation to maintain peace.

The Book of Islamic Education and Character Building for Junior High School highlights the theme of the Wali Songo as an appropriate theme for strengthening the value of appreciation for local culture. However, the book primarily focuses on the historical aspect and does not provide a thorough description of the moderation values inherent in this theme. To enhance learning, how the Wali Songo spread Islam in a friendly and tolerant manner while considering the psychological conditions of the community can be expounded. They propagated Islam through cultural expressions, such as using puppets, which Sunan Kalijaga popularized as an educational medium to make Islam more easily accepted by the people. This had a psychological impact on the native people, influencing their behaviour and thoughts to continue appreciating the legacy of their ancestors. Furthermore, Sunan Bonang also used the art of *gamelan* music as a means of education.

Helen Loth's doctoral dissertation study conducted in Indonesia has demonstrated that gamelan music can have therapeutic effects on individuals with special needs, including those with learning disabilities, mental health issues, sensory disorders, social welfare, social skills, communication skills, and collaboration skills (Loth, 2014). Therefore, education's embodiment lies in the

interaction between religion and culture, which can be achieved through artistic elements as a form of the moderate Islamic movement. By using local culture, the Wali Songo's role in nurturing the psychological well-being of society is considered an acculturation of psychology, which can lead an individual towards stronger spiritual growth. Such narratives highlight the need for authors of the book "Islamic Education and Character Building" for junior high schools to emphasize the value of moderation related to local culture, which is often overlooked.

Developing the substance of Islamic Education textbooks should be a part of the nation and character-building development planning. Hefner noted that although Islamic education in Indonesia is better than in some other Islamic countries in the Middle East in terms of accepting state policies and responding to global challenges and modernization, there is no adequate master plan for building Islamic education in the modern era. Additionally, the differences in schools adapting to various approaches and curricula in response to diversity and social-political changes have not been well-addressed (Hefner, R. W., & Cook, 2010). Given the global constellation of strengthening transnational Islamic movements and strengthening identity politics in Indonesia, a review of the content and model of Islamic Education learning in schools is necessary.

CONCLUSION

The findings suggest that the content of moderate religious values in Islamic Education and Character-Building textbooks for junior high school has not received sufficient attention. Although the textbooks touch on moderate values such as anti-violence, nationalism, tolerance, and appreciation of local culture, they do not emphasize these values strongly. The relevant topics are explained normatively, relying on dalil naqli. Morality is elaborated on a personal level, and worship is emphasized in these textbooks. While potential themes for national values, tolerance, and local wisdom are discussed in several topics such as the migration of the Prophet Muhammad, the reign of Medina, the story of Walisongo, and the development of Islam in the archipelago, the meaning of the arguments cited has not elaborated on the intended moderation values. Additionally, the content is not contextualized, and the description is not related to the social-religious problems faced by Indonesian society today.

Considering the strategic position of Islamic Education and Character-Building textbooks for junior high school and their weaknesses in articulating the values of religious moderation, the recommendation of PPIM UIN Jakarta is supported. The government should prioritize Islamic Education as a cultural policy to ensure that the textbooks and teaching practices promote national identity and religious moderation

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