



Religious Moderation as An Effort to Increase Religious Understanding Among Teenagers in Bekasi Regency

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Abstract: As a nation rich in religious and cultural diversity, Indonesia faces challenges in maintaining interfaith harmony, particularly among the younger generation. Adolescents—the group most vulnerable to the influence of radicalization—require a moderate understanding of religion to prevent potential social conflict. With its large youth population, Bekasi Regency serves as a strategic location for implementing religious moderation to foster a more inclusive and tolerant religious understanding. This study aims to explore the role of religious moderation in enhancing religious understanding among adolescents in Bekasi Regency and to analyze the factors influencing the application of religious moderation in their daily lives. A qualitative approach utilizing a case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and focus group discussions with adolescents from diverse religious and social backgrounds in Bekasi Regency. Purposive sampling was used to obtain in-depth insights into perceptions and practices regarding religious moderation among the youth. The findings indicate that adolescents in Bekasi Regency tend to possess a moderate religious understanding when they participate in religious activities that promote tolerance and inclusivity. Religious education emphasizing values of religious moderation has proven effective in reducing radical attitudes and strengthening interfaith relations among adolescents. The study concludes that religious moderation is key to fostering a more inclusive and tolerant religious understanding among young people. Consequently, efforts to integrate religious moderation into religious education and activities in Bekasi Regency can enhance social harmony among adolescents. This research makes a significant contribution to the development of more moderate religious education, particularly for the youth. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers and educators in designing curricula that promote religious moderation at the local level.

Keywords: inclusivity; radicalization; religious education; religious moderation; religious understanding.

Introduction

Indonesia, as a country with ethnic and cultural diversity, has big challenges in maintaining social harmony between groups. The diversity of religions in Indonesia provides its color in people's lives but also challenges creating peaceful and tolerant relations. In this case, religious moderation is an important approach to maintaining a balance between religious freedom and harmony between religious communities (Aullia et al., 2024). Religious moderation encourages individuals to uphold mutual respect, appreciate differences, and avoid extreme attitudes that may threaten social harmony. For teenagers, these values are particularly important because they represent the future generation responsible for maintaining peace and social cohesion. Developing a balanced understanding of

religion can help adolescents distinguish between strong religious commitment and attitudes that promote intolerance or exclusion. Through moderation-based education, teenagers can learn to respond thoughtfully to differences, communicate respectfully, and build positive relationships with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.

This understanding is increasingly important in the digital era, when young people are frequently exposed to various religious narratives through social media. Without adequate religious literacy and critical thinking, extreme interpretations may influence their attitudes and behavior. Therefore, families, schools, religious institutions, and youth communities should work together to strengthen religious moderation among adolescents. Providing inclusive education and opportunities for constructive dialogue can help teenagers develop tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility while protecting the integrity of Indonesia's diverse society (AR, 2020). Therefore, education that teaches the principles of religious moderation is needed to create teenagers with broad insight and an inclusive attitude towards religious differences (Khumaini et al., 2023). A moderate understanding of religion will help them be more open and respectful of each other.

Bekasi Regency, an area with a large and diverse population, is a strategic setting for implementing religious moderation among teenagers. The Bekasi Regency community, which consists of various religious and cultural backgrounds, presents its challenges in building attitudes of tolerance among the younger generation (Aryati et al., 2024). With this diversity, teenagers in Bekasi Regency need to be provided with education that not only teaches religion theoretically, but also how to apply it in everyday life, with full tolerance (Nafiuddin & Maharani, 2024). The implementation of religious moderation among teenagers in Bekasi Regency is expected to reduce the potential for social conflict arising from differences in religious beliefs, interpretations, and practices. Religious moderation can equip adolescents to respond to differences with tolerance, dialogue, and mutual respect rather than rejection or hostility. In a diverse social environment, these values are important for maintaining harmonious relationships among young people from different religious and cultural backgrounds.

Strengthening moderation can also help prevent prejudice, exclusivism, and intolerance that may develop when religious differences are understood narrowly. Schools, families, religious institutions, and youth communities can contribute by providing educational activities that promote balanced religious understanding and constructive interaction. Discussions, social programs, interfaith activities, and collaborative community initiatives can give teenagers practical experience in respecting diversity. Through continuous implementation, religious moderation can become part of adolescents' everyday attitudes and behavior. Ultimately, this approach is expected to strengthen social cohesion, encourage peaceful coexistence, and contribute to maintaining harmony in Bekasi Regency (Herdiana et al., 2023). Through educational programs, training, and social activities grounded in religious moderation, teenagers can develop a deeper understanding of the importance of mutual respect, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. These activities provide practical opportunities for young people to experience diversity and learn how to respond constructively to differences in religious beliefs, cultural traditions, and social backgrounds.

Religious moderation education should therefore combine theoretical understanding with direct social interaction so that its values can be applied in everyday life. Training sessions can introduce principles of tolerance, dialogue, empathy, and responsible religious expression, while community activities can encourage cooperation among teenagers from diverse backgrounds. Schools, families, religious institutions, and youth organizations can work together to create inclusive learning environments that discourage prejudice and exclusivism. In addition, digital literacy can be incorporated to help teenagers evaluate religious information encountered on social media. Through continuous participation, teenagers are expected to develop balanced religious perspectives, respect diversity, reject intolerance, and contribute actively to creating harmonious relationships within their communities (Rasulova & Toroev, 2024). A good understanding of religious moderation will not only form religious individuals, but also create harmonious and inclusive communities (Rasyidi et al., 2024).

Thus, strengthening religious moderation among teenagers in Bekasi Regency is a strategic step in forming a young generation who has a deep understanding of religion but still respects differences. Great hopes are placed on these teenagers to become the front guard in maintaining peace and strengthening social harmony amidst existing diversity (Adnan et al., 2024). Although religious

moderation has become an increasingly prominent topic in academic and public discourse, its implementation among teenagers in Bekasi Regency has not yet received sufficient attention. Existing discussions often emphasize the conceptual foundations of religious moderation, while empirical studies examining how these principles are understood and practiced by adolescents in specific local contexts remain relatively limited. This gap is important because teenagers experience significant social, cultural, and technological changes that can influence their religious perspectives and attitudes toward diversity.

Bekasi Regency has a heterogeneous social environment in which adolescents interact with people from different religious, cultural, and community backgrounds. Such conditions create both opportunities for developing tolerance and challenges related to exclusivism, prejudice, and misunderstanding. Furthermore, the increasing use of social media exposes teenagers to diverse religious narratives, including constructive as well as potentially intolerant content. Therefore, examining religious moderation among adolescents in Bekasi Regency is important for understanding their current religious perspectives and identifying factors that shape them. This research seeks to contribute to the development of more contextual strategies for strengthening religious moderation through education, youth activities, family involvement, and community engagement, thereby supporting social harmony and tolerance among the younger generation (Fauziyah & Hidayati, 2023). Most research on religious moderation focuses more on the application of religious principles in a more general and broader context, without paying attention to the specific context of adolescents in urban areas. This causes a lack of in-depth understanding of how religious moderation can be implemented in the daily lives of teenagers living in urban environments with high social diversity (Sihono & Cahyo, 2024).

Many existing studies tend to generalize approaches to religious moderation without paying attention to differences in local contexts. Each region, including Bekasi Regency, has social and cultural characteristics that influence the way teenagers view religion. Understanding religious moderation cannot be separated from local social factors that shape the thinking patterns and behavior of teenagers in the area. Therefore, it is important to explore more deeply how the local context of Bekasi Regency influences attitudes toward religious moderation among teenagers (Sucipto & Avezahra, 2023). In addition, the factors that influence moderate understanding of religion among teenagers in Bekasi Regency are still very little researched. Teenagers are often exposed to various influences, both from the family environment, education, and social media, which can shape their perspective on religion (Nainggolan et al., 2024). In-depth research into these factors is urgently needed so that we can understand more clearly how these various influences interact to form a more moderate religious understanding among adolescents (Masitah et al., 2024).

One of the main limitations in the existing research is the lack of empirical data examining the extent to which religious moderation can reduce tendencies toward radicalization among teenagers, particularly in urban and socially diverse areas such as Bekasi Regency. Although various educational and community programs have been developed to promote religious moderation, their effectiveness in influencing adolescents' attitudes and responses toward radical or intolerant ideas remains insufficiently documented. Many studies focus on conceptual aspects of moderation, while fewer examine its practical impact on young people's religious attitudes and social behavior. This creates an important research gap, particularly regarding how moderation-based education can serve as a preventive approach. Therefore, further research is needed to assess how religious moderation influences teenagers' tolerance, openness, critical thinking, and resistance to exclusive or radical narratives. Such research can also identify the roles of schools, families, religious leaders, youth organizations, and digital environments in strengthening these outcomes. Evidence from local contexts such as Bekasi Regency is expected to provide a stronger foundation for developing effective strategies to prevent radicalization and promote peaceful, inclusive religious understanding among the younger generation (Wijayati & Fuad, 2024).

Thus, this research aims to fill this gap by exploring more deeply the influence of religious moderation on inclusive religious understanding among teenagers in Bekasi Regency. It is hoped that this will help increase teenagers' awareness and understanding of the importance of religious moderation in facing social challenges in urban communities. Much research has been conducted on religious moderation, but most studies focus more on the national or adult community level, while adolescents are often given less attention in this context (Wijayati & Fuad, 2024).

Several studies show the importance of religious moderation in reducing radicalization, but its implementation among teenagers, especially in urban areas such as Bekasi Regency, is still minimally studied (Hutagalung & Khairulman, 2023). This creates a research gap that needs to be filled to better understand how religious moderation can be applied in the daily lives of teenagers in a pluralistic and dynamic environment. Filling this gap is very important because teenagers are a group that is very vulnerable to the influence of extreme ideologies, both through social media and the environment around them. By focusing on teenagers in Bekasi Regency, this research aims to explore the factors that influence their understanding of religious moderation. Apart from that, this research also aims to understand how the values of religious moderation can be introduced in a relevant and effective way, which is appropriate to the challenges and social dynamics in the region (Aziz et al., 2024).

The primary objective of this research is to formulate effective strategies for strengthening teenagers' understanding and practice of religious moderation in Bekasi Regency. The study seeks to identify appropriate educational, social, and community-based approaches that can help adolescents apply moderation principles in their everyday interactions. Religious moderation is expected to encourage tolerance, mutual respect, openness, and peaceful engagement with people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. The research also examines the role of schools, families, religious institutions, youth organizations, and digital environments in supporting the development of moderate religious attitudes. By identifying relevant strategies, the study aims to provide practical recommendations for strengthening inclusive religious education and preventing intolerance and radicalization among young people. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute to building social harmony, strengthening community cohesion, and developing a generation of teenagers who are religiously committed while remaining respectful, tolerant, and responsible within Indonesia's pluralistic society.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine religious moderation among teenagers in Bekasi Regency. The approach is selected to provide an in-depth understanding of adolescents' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of religious moderation within their everyday social environments. Data will be collected through several techniques, including in-depth interviews, direct observation, and focus group discussions involving teenagers from schools and youth communities across Bekasi Regency. Interviews will explore participants' understanding of religious tolerance, respect for differences, peaceful interaction, and attitudes toward diversity. Observations will examine how these values are practiced in daily social interactions, while focus group discussions will provide opportunities to identify shared perspectives and differing viewpoints. The collected data will be analyzed thematically to identify patterns, meanings, and factors influencing religious understanding and moderation among youth. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of religious moderation practices among teenagers and their implications for strengthening inclusive religious understanding (Sugiyono, 2020).

To obtain comprehensive and representative data, this study will purposively select teenagers from diverse religious, social, and cultural backgrounds across Bekasi Regency. Purposive sampling is employed to ensure that participants possess relevant experiences and perspectives concerning religious moderation. The selection will consider variations in age, educational background, social environment, and participation in youth or religious activities. In addition to teenagers as the primary participants, the research will involve teachers, religious leaders, parents, and youth community managers as supporting informants. Their involvement is intended to provide broader perspectives on the social, educational, and religious factors shaping adolescents' understanding and attitudes toward religious moderation. Data from these different groups will enable researchers to compare perspectives and identify similarities and differences in how religious moderation is understood and practiced. This diverse participant composition is expected to strengthen the credibility of findings and provide a more holistic understanding of religious moderation among teenagers in Bekasi Regency (Fiantika et al., 2022).

Data analysis in this study uses thematic analysis to systematically identify, organize, and interpret themes emerging from interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. The collected data will first be transcribed, coded, and categorized according to issues relevant to religious

moderation. The analysis will focus on themes such as religious understanding, tolerance, respect for diversity, social interaction, and attitudes toward differences. Each theme will then be examined to identify recurring patterns, similarities, differences, and relationships among participants' perspectives. The analysis will also explore factors influencing teenagers' understanding and practice of religious moderation, including family, education, religious communities, peers, and social media. This process will provide a comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon in Bekasi Regency (Murdiyanto, 2020). It is hoped that the results of this analysis will provide insight into how religious moderation can be implemented effectively among teenagers in Bekasi Regency to increase inclusive and tolerant religious understanding.

Results and Discussion

Description of the Understanding of Religious Moderation

Literature studies indicate that religious moderation plays an important role in developing an inclusive, tolerant, and balanced understanding of religion among adolescents. Religious moderation encourages young people to avoid extreme attitudes while maintaining commitment to their own religious beliefs and respecting differences in faith, culture, and social identity. Several studies demonstrate that the implementation of moderation values among teenagers can strengthen tolerance, mutual respect, and harmonious relationships between religious communities. Through religious education, dialogue, collaborative activities, and community engagement, adolescents can develop greater awareness of diversity and learn to respond to differences constructively.

Religious moderation also provides an important foundation for preventing prejudice, exclusivism, and intolerance that may emerge from limited understanding of other religious perspectives. In the context of youth development, these values are particularly significant because adolescents are actively forming their identities and social relationships. Therefore, schools, families, religious institutions, and youth organizations have an important role in integrating moderation principles into educational and social activities. Strengthening religious moderation should also involve critical digital literacy so that teenagers can evaluate religious information encountered through social media. Overall, the literature suggests that sustained religious moderation education can contribute significantly to developing young people who are tolerant, inclusive, responsible, and capable of maintaining peaceful social relations within Indonesia's pluralistic society (Rasyidi et al., 2024).

In Indonesia's diverse religious and cultural context, religious moderation is essential for preventing social conflict arising from differences in beliefs, traditions, and identities. A moderate religious understanding can help teenagers develop openness, tolerance, and respect when encountering perspectives that differ from their own. Such an approach enables young people to respond to differences thoughtfully rather than emotionally or judgmentally. It also reduces the risk of prejudice, stereotyping, and exclusivist attitudes that may contribute to social tension. Religious moderation encourages teenagers to recognize diversity as a natural part of Indonesian society while maintaining their own religious commitments. This perspective is particularly important in the digital era, when young people are frequently exposed to religious information, opinions, and debates through social media. Critical and balanced religious understanding can help teenagers avoid misinformation, hate speech, and provocative content. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation through education, family guidance, community activities, and youth engagement is necessary to build a generation that is tolerant, resilient, and capable of maintaining peaceful social relations amid Indonesia's diversity (Amri et al., 2024).

Research on religious education indicates that emphasizing religious moderation can help reduce teenagers' vulnerability to radical and extremist ideas. Ikhsanul Omar highlights the importance of moderate religious education in developing balanced perspectives and preventing the influence of extreme interpretations. In schools and Islamic boarding schools, moderation-based education can broaden students' understanding of tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence among religious communities. This approach encourages teenagers to recognize diversity as part of social reality rather than a threat to religious identity. It also strengthens critical thinking when responding to religious narratives that promote intolerance or exclusion. These principles are consistent with multicultural education theory, which emphasizes diversity, equality, dialogue, and

social harmony. Therefore, integrating religious moderation into educational practices can contribute to developing young people who are tolerant, inclusive, and capable of maintaining constructive relationships within Indonesia's pluralistic society (S et al., 2024).

Previous research in urban and heterogeneous areas, including Bekasi Regency, indicates that adolescents' religious understanding can be influenced significantly by their social and cultural environments. Fauziyah and Hidayati explain that diverse communities may shape teenagers' perspectives on religion in different ways, particularly through interactions with family, peers, schools, and local communities. Some adolescents may still possess limited understanding of religious moderation and consequently develop exclusive attitudes toward differences in beliefs, traditions, or religious practices. This condition highlights the importance of creating supportive environments that encourage dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect. Families play an important role in providing balanced religious guidance, while schools can strengthen moderation through inclusive educational practices. Communities and youth organizations can further support these efforts by creating opportunities for positive social interaction across differences. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation requires collaboration among families, educational institutions, religious leaders, and society to help adolescents develop open, tolerant, and socially responsible character (Fauziyah & Hidayati, 2023).

Another significant factor shaping teenagers' understanding of religious moderation is their involvement in religious activities that promote tolerance, dialogue, and balanced perspectives. Nurmalasari's research suggests that adolescents who actively participate in moderation-oriented religious programs tend to show greater openness toward differences in beliefs, traditions, and religious practices. Activities such as *pengajian*, religious discussions, seminars, social services, and youth forums provide valuable opportunities for teenagers to encounter diverse perspectives while strengthening their religious knowledge. Through these activities, young people can learn that religious commitment can coexist with respect for people who hold different beliefs. Regular participation also allows teenagers to practice tolerance through direct interaction rather than simply understanding it as a theoretical concept. Religious activities that emphasize moderation can therefore become important spaces for developing empathy, mutual respect, and peaceful communication. Consequently, encouraging teenagers to participate actively in inclusive religious programs can strengthen their capacity to appreciate diversity and contribute positively to harmonious relationships within society.

Through these activities, adolescents can learn that religious commitment does not necessarily require rejecting differences or distancing themselves from other groups. Instead, moderate religious engagement encourages mutual respect, peaceful communication, and cooperation in addressing shared social concerns. Regular participation also creates a supportive social environment in which values of tolerance can be practiced rather than merely discussed theoretically. Religious leaders, teachers, and youth organizers therefore have an important role in designing activities that combine religious knowledge with practical experiences of social interaction. Such programs should provide space for dialogue, reflection, and collaborative action so that teenagers can internalize moderation values more effectively. Consequently, active involvement in inclusive religious activities can strengthen adolescents' religious literacy, empathy, and capacity to maintain harmonious relationships within a diverse society (Nurmalasari et al., 2024).

Active participation in moderate religious activities can positively contribute to adolescent character development. Beyond strengthening religious knowledge, such involvement provides teenagers with opportunities to interact, communicate, and cooperate with individuals from different religious, cultural, and social backgrounds. These experiences can broaden their understanding of pluralism and encourage them to recognize diversity as a normal part of social life. Through interfaith dialogue, community service, social activities, and collaborative programs, teenagers can develop empathy, mutual respect, and openness toward differences. Direct interaction also helps reduce prejudice and negative stereotypes that may arise from limited knowledge or social distance. In this context, religious activities should not only emphasize individual religious devotion but also promote social responsibility, peaceful coexistence, and respect for others. For teenagers in Bekasi Regency, participation in inclusive activities can strengthen their ability to respond constructively to religious differences. Therefore, moderate religious activities can serve as an important educational medium for developing tolerant, inclusive, and socially responsible young people (Schnitker et al., 2024).

Thus, through this approach, teenagers in Bekasi Regency can learn to appreciate differences more and apply a tolerant attitude in everyday life.

The importance of strengthening religious moderation among teenagers in Bekasi Regency is increasingly evident amid the widespread circulation of religious content through social media. Adolescents may encounter narratives that promote intolerance, exclusivism, or radical interpretations without sufficient opportunities to verify their accuracy. Their developmental stage and intensive engagement with digital platforms can make them vulnerable to misleading or provocative information. Therefore, moderate religious education is essential as a preventive strategy for developing critical, balanced, and inclusive religious perspectives. This education should be implemented through both formal and non-formal channels, including schools, families, religious institutions, youth organizations, and community activities. Teenagers need to be equipped with the ability to distinguish credible religious information from misleading content and to respond to differences constructively.

Digital literacy should be integrated into religious moderation education to equip adolescents with the ability to critically evaluate religious information encountered through online platforms. Teenagers are frequently exposed to diverse opinions, interpretations, and religious narratives through social media, websites, and digital communities, making critical evaluation increasingly important. Digital literacy enables them to distinguish credible information from misleading content, identify provocative narratives, and avoid sharing unverified religious claims. When combined with religious moderation, these skills can encourage adolescents to respond to differences thoughtfully and reject messages that promote intolerance, hatred, or exclusion. Schools, families, religious institutions, and youth organizations can provide training that combines religious understanding with responsible digital engagement. Teenagers should also be encouraged to verify sources, compare different perspectives, and consult qualified religious authorities when encountering complex religious issues. Strengthening these capacities can help young people become more resilient against intolerant narratives while promoting respectful communication in digital spaces. Ultimately, integrating digital literacy and religious moderation can contribute to developing a generation capable of using technology responsibly and supporting social harmony within Indonesia's diverse society (Aziz et al., 2024).

The findings from this research also show that there is a gap in the implementation of religious moderation among teenagers in Bekasi Regency. Most teenagers do not fully understand the concept of moderation and are more likely to accept exclusive and sectarian teachings. In this case, it is important to integrate the values of religious moderation more systematically in the educational curriculum in schools and other educational institutions. In this regard, this research seeks to fill the gap in previous research which has not studied in depth the implementation of religious moderation among teenagers in urban areas. Previous research has focused more on national or regional contexts with a more homogeneous level of diversity. This research seeks to explore further how religious moderation can be implemented in areas with a high level of diversity, such as Bekasi Regency. Through a community-based approach, this research tries to understand how social interactions between teenagers with different religious backgrounds can strengthen the principles of religious moderation. One effective way is through interfaith dialogue facilitated by schools or religious organizations. By taking this approach, teenagers can be invited to understand religious diversity more deeply, as well as the importance of mutual respect.

Level of Understanding of Religious Moderation Among Youth in Bekasi Regency.

The discussion should connect these findings with multicultural education and tolerance theories, which emphasize respect, equality, dialogue, and appreciation of religious diversity. Religious education grounded in moderation can serve as a practical application of these principles by encouraging students to recognize differences without developing prejudice or exclusivist attitudes. Diversity in religion and culture should therefore be understood as a social resource that strengthens cooperation and solidarity rather than as a source of division. In the context of Bekasi Regency, multicultural education can provide teenagers with the knowledge and skills needed to interact constructively with peers from different backgrounds. Religious moderation also encourages balanced attitudes, including respect for other beliefs while maintaining one's own religious identity. Through dialogue, collaborative activities, and inclusive educational practices, teenagers can develop

empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect. Consequently, integrating multicultural education and religious moderation can contribute to creating a peaceful, inclusive, and socially cohesive youth community (Wibowo et al., 2024).

As explained by Ikhsanul Omar, one effective strategy for strengthening religious moderation among teenagers is to involve them directly in activities that promote tolerance, dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding. Such activities provide practical experiences through which adolescents can encounter and appreciate religious and cultural differences in their social environment. Rather than learning moderation only through theoretical explanations, teenagers can develop inclusive attitudes through meaningful interaction with peers from diverse backgrounds. Collaborative activities, interfaith discussions, social service programs, cultural events, and community projects can create opportunities for adolescents to practice respect, empathy, and peaceful communication.

These experiences can also reduce prejudice and prevent negative stereotypes toward people with different beliefs or cultural identities. In this context, religious moderation does not mean weakening religious commitment, but developing a balanced understanding that allows individuals to maintain their religious identity while respecting others. For teenagers in Bekasi Regency, such an approach is particularly relevant because they live within a socially and culturally diverse environment. Therefore, educational institutions, families, religious leaders, and youth organizations need to provide constructive spaces for interaction and dialogue. Through continuous participation in inclusive activities, teenagers can gradually develop attitudes of openness, tolerance, mutual respect, and social responsibility. This process ultimately contributes to strengthening harmonious relationships and preventing religious intolerance among young people (S et al., 2024). Therefore, moderate religious education is very important to create a more peaceful and tolerant generation.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that religious moderation plays an important role in strengthening inclusive, tolerant, and balanced religious understanding among teenagers. Religious moderation encourages young people to maintain their religious commitment while respecting differences in beliefs, traditions, and cultural backgrounds. The study indicates that teenagers' understanding can be strengthened through educational processes that emphasize tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. Therefore, religious moderation education should not be limited to classroom instruction but should also be integrated into religious activities, youth communities, extracurricular programs, and social initiatives. Schools, families, religious leaders, and youth organizations have an important responsibility in creating environments that support these values. Interactive discussions, collaborative activities, interfaith encounters, and community service can provide practical opportunities for teenagers to develop empathy and openness toward diversity. Continuous strengthening of religious moderation is essential to prevent intolerance, exclusivism, and prejudice among young people. In this regard, educational strategies should be adapted to teenagers' social realities, including their interactions through digital media. Sustained efforts can help develop a generation capable of practicing religious values peacefully while contributing positively to a diverse and harmonious Indonesian society (Ghandi, 2024). With this approach, it is hoped that Bekasi Regency teenagers can become agents of change who have a positive impact on social harmony and diversity in society.

Constraints and Negative Values in Activities

1. The Absence of Ethical Boundaries in Discussion Forums

The findings indicate that a relaxed approach to discussion forums, characterized by the freedom to smoke, eat, drink, and enter or leave the gathering without restriction, may provide an inclusive and comfortable environment for participants. However, excessive informality can also influence the seriousness of the learning process and reduce respect for religious knowledge and the congregation. When ethical norms are not clearly established, participants may perceive religious study as an ordinary social activity rather than as a meaningful educational and spiritual process. This condition may affect concentration, discipline, interaction patterns, and the internalization of religious values. Research by Salma and colleagues similarly emphasizes that exemplary conduct and appropriate etiquette during learning activities can influence the effectiveness of religious education and the internalization of spiritual values within communities.

Therefore, openness in Islamic study groups should be balanced with clear guidance regarding participation ethics. Participants need to understand the importance of maintaining respectful behavior, attentive listening, appropriate communication, and appreciation for religious teachers and fellow learners. Such norms do not necessarily eliminate the informal character of community-based religious learning; instead, they provide a framework that preserves its educational and spiritual purpose. Strengthening ethical standards in non-formal Islamic learning spaces is consequently important for maintaining spirituality, discipline, mutual respect, and the authority of religious knowledge. A balanced combination of accessibility, social comfort, and ethical discipline can create learning environments that remain welcoming while preserving the dignity and meaningfulness of religious education Salma and friends (2024).

2. *Lack of Oversight in Free Discussion*

The evaluation of the data from open discussion sessions within the “Healthy Youth” community indicates that limited oversight can create several challenges for the quality of religious learning. Discussions that lack clear moderation may develop into unfocused debates, weakly supported arguments, and exchanges of religious opinions without adequate scholarly references. Such conditions may create misunderstandings, particularly among participants who have limited access to authoritative religious resources. Uncontrolled discussions can also encourage the circulation of interpretations based primarily on personal assumptions rather than reliable sources, potentially contributing to religious bias and weakening the credibility of the learning process. In Islamic educational traditions, the pursuit of knowledge is closely associated with ethical conduct, sincere intentions, respect for teachers, and responsibility in conveying information.

Therefore, open participation should be accompanied by appropriate scholarly etiquette and structured facilitation. Discussion forums can remain inclusive while introducing mechanisms such as qualified facilitators, verification of references, clear discussion objectives, and ethical guidelines for expressing opinions. Participants should be encouraged to distinguish between established religious knowledge, scholarly interpretation, and personal opinion. These measures can help prevent misinformation while maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual openness. The findings suggest that moderation does not necessarily restrict participation; rather, it provides direction that allows discussion to remain productive, respectful, and academically responsible. Strengthening these practices is important for preserving the quality and integrity of religious education among youth while encouraging critical thinking, mutual respect, and responsible engagement with Islamic knowledge (Darsi & Mitra, 2022).

3. *Lack of Standardization of Study Materials*

The data review indicates that the absence of standardized learning materials in the “Healthy Youth” community affects the direction and effectiveness of religious learning. The learning process depends heavily on the initiative, knowledge, and teaching abilities of individual instructors, without a structured syllabus or clearly defined learning sequence. Consequently, discussions may become fragmented, repetitive, or unrelated to participants’ learning needs. The absence of systematic objectives also makes it difficult to evaluate participants’ understanding and identify gaps between basic and advanced religious materials. This condition may hinder the development of comprehensive religious understanding (*tafaqquh fi al-dīn*), because participants do not receive knowledge progressively and systematically. Previous studies concerning *kitab kuning* learning similarly emphasize the importance of curriculum and syllabus consistency in strengthening students’ cognitive abilities and supporting effective religious education.

Building on this perspective, the findings highlight challenges faced by independent, non-formal religious communities that emphasize flexibility and voluntary participation. Such flexibility can increase accessibility and encourage broader participation, but the absence of basic educational standards may cause discussion forums to function primarily as informal social spaces rather than structured learning environments. Therefore, a simple and adaptable syllabus is recommended, containing monthly learning objectives, sequential themes, relevant references, and basic assessments of participants’ understanding. According to Saputra (2021), systematic learning structures can support the effectiveness and continuity of educational processes without necessarily reducing their flexibility. In this context, implementing basic academic guidelines would not eliminate the informal

character of the community. Instead, it would provide clearer direction and help participants understand the progression of religious learning. A balanced model that combines openness, voluntary participation, and basic educational structure can support the gradual development of religious knowledge. Such an approach can strengthen learning quality while preserving the inclusive, participatory, and community-oriented character of non-formal Islamic education.

4. *Dependence on a Central Figure*

The data analysis shows that the “Healthy Youth” community relies heavily on Ustadz Rahmat as a central figure in organizing and implementing its activities. His leadership provides direction, coordination, and continuity for religious programs; however, excessive dependence on one individual creates organizational vulnerability. If the central figure becomes unavailable, less active, or unable to continue leading, the community may experience difficulties in maintaining its activities and religious learning programs. This condition may also limit opportunities for leadership succession and the development of organizational independence. Similar patterns can be observed in Islamic boarding schools, where kiai often function as central figures whose authority strongly influences educational, managerial, and spiritual activities.

Without an organized cadre system, leadership transitions may disrupt the continuity and stability of the “Healthy Youth” community. From a structural perspective, dependence on a single central figure indicates the need to strengthen internal regeneration and distribute leadership responsibilities more effectively. Leadership should gradually be shared among several capable members so that organizational activities do not depend entirely on one individual. Falah, (2019) emphasizes the importance of leadership regeneration in maintaining organizational sustainability and strengthening collective responsibility. Therefore, this study recommends developing a simple leadership cadre model through mentoring, rotating administrative responsibilities, leadership training, and the formation of a core management team. These mechanisms can provide younger members with opportunities to develop organizational, communication, and religious leadership skills. A structured regeneration process can also preserve the community’s spiritual identity while increasing its organizational resilience. Through systematic succession, members can develop greater confidence and independence in managing activities. Consequently, the sustainability of the “Healthy Youth” community can be maintained despite changes in leadership, while participation, collective responsibility, and organizational independence among youth members are strengthened.

5. *Excessive Activity Time*

The data analysis indicates that religious study activities within the “Healthy Youth” community, which sometimes continue until approximately 1:00 a.m., may create physical and emotional fatigue among participants. Although extended nighttime gatherings can provide opportunities for spiritual learning and social interaction, insufficient rest may affect participants’ ability to perform the Subuh prayer attentively and reduce their productivity during the following day. This situation reflects the importance of maintaining *tawazun*, or balance, between worship, social activities, physical needs, and daily responsibilities. The study “The Prohibition of Staying Up Late as an Islamic Perspective on Immunity Maintenance” similarly discusses the potential negative consequences of excessive late-night activity for physical well-being. From an Islamic perspective, religious activities should ideally support overall human welfare rather than create conditions that undermine health or interfere with other religious obligations.

Therefore, scheduling religious study activities should consider participants’ sleep patterns, educational or occupational responsibilities, and daily worship routines. The “Healthy Youth” community should establish a reasonable time limit for nighttime activities, preferably concluding before midnight when circumstances permit. Such regulation can help prevent excessive fatigue and ensure that participants remain able to perform the Subuh prayer properly and fulfill their responsibilities the following day. Periodic evaluations of sleep quality, attendance at Subuh prayer, concentration during study sessions, and daytime productivity can also be conducted to determine whether the existing schedule remains appropriate. Providing adequate opportunities for rest does not reduce the spiritual value of religious learning; rather, it supports participants’ ability to engage in study with greater concentration, emotional stability, and sincerity. This approach is consistent with the principle of balance in Islamic life, which emphasizes harmony between worship, physical needs,

social activities, and daily responsibilities. As noted by Almunawir, (2021), maintaining appropriate patterns of activity and rest is important for supporting physical and spiritual well-being. Through balanced time management, the community can preserve the benefits of nighttime religious study while protecting members' health, worship, productivity, and overall quality of life.

6. *The Risk of Social and Symbolic Polarization*

Data analysis indicates that the active participation of diverse communities, including Vespa groups, youth organizations, and mosque youth, contributes positively to religious discussions within the "Healthy Youth" community. Their involvement broadens social interaction, encourages participation, and introduces diverse experiences into the learning environment. However, without effective management, differences in perspectives, group affiliations, and identity symbols may generate symbolic tensions and encourage exclusive tendencies. This can occur when collective identity becomes more dominant than the substantive religious values being discussed, shifting attention from spirituality and knowledge toward group affiliation. Similar concerns have been identified in studies of Generation Z, which indicate that strong group attachment may contribute to intolerance and exclusivist attitudes when not balanced by openness and respect for diversity. From a social-psychological perspective, this phenomenon can be understood through identity fusion, in which individual and collective identities become strongly interconnected and may produce an "us versus them" distinction. Such boundaries can weaken social cohesion and reduce the inclusiveness of religious learning.

Discussion forums should adopt an inclusive management framework that respects participants' diverse backgrounds while maintaining shared religious objectives. Inclusivity does not require eliminating differences but managing them constructively so diversity becomes a source of learning rather than division. Practical strategies include rotating seating arrangements, limiting group symbols, establishing participation rules, and appointing neutral facilitators. These measures can prevent group identity from overshadowing the substance of religious learning. Facilitators should encourage respectful dialogue, ensure equal opportunities to express opinions, and prevent discussions from being dominated by particular groups. Participants should also focus on shared religious and humanitarian values rather than organizational differences. Sukmayadi and friends (2023) emphasize the importance of inclusive interaction in strengthening social harmony and mutual understanding. Properly managed diversity can transform religious forums into spaces that strengthen solidarity, tolerance, brotherhood, and peaceful coexistence among youth.

Conclusion

This research aims to examine the role of religious moderation in increasing religious understanding among teenagers in Bekasi Regency. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the application of religious moderation among teenagers is very important in forming an understanding of religion that is inclusive, tolerant, and respects differences. The results of this research support the argument that religious moderation can be an effective tool for preventing radicalization and building social harmony among the younger generation, especially in areas that have religious and cultural diversity such as Bekasi Regency. Through literature study, it was found that although religious moderation has been widely discussed in general studies, its application among teenagers, especially in urban areas, is still minimally researched. Most of the existing research focuses more on the implementation of religious moderation on a larger scale, such as at the adult societal level or in the context of the country in general. Therefore, this research fills this gap by examining the application of religious moderation in the context of adolescent life in Bekasi Regency, an area with high social and cultural diversity. This is important because teenagers are a group that is very vulnerable to the influence of extreme ideologies, and a moderate understanding can help them to be wiser in facing differences. The main contribution of this research is that it offers a new perspective on how religious moderation can be practically applied in the education and daily lives of adolescents. Through this research, it was found that the integration of religious moderation values in religious education in schools and youth communities can increase teenagers' awareness of the importance of tolerance and togetherness between religious communities. In addition, the active involvement of teenagers in various religious activities that emphasize moderation can be an effective strategy for reducing the

potential for radicalization and strengthening harmonious social relations. Therefore, it is important to focus more attention on religious moderation education among teenagers, so that they can grow into more inclusive and tolerant individuals, ready to face increasingly complex global challenges. This research provides an important basis for developing religious education policies that are more adaptive and relevant to local socio-cultural conditions. By implementing religious moderation effectively, it is hoped that teenagers in Bekasi Regency, and in other areas, can better appreciate differences and strengthen harmony between religious communities.

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