Strengthening Character Education: An Action Research in Forming Religious Moderation in Islamic Education

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Abstract. A country with religious and cultural diversity, such as Indonesia, necessitates the cultivation of a moderate attitude, particularly through character education. This study aims to identify effective learning steps to develop a sense of religious moderation in high school students in Islamic Education. To achieve this goal, action research was chosen as the research design, as it provides a framework for addressing pedagogical issues and finding solutions. The study involved 50 students from two high schools in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia, conducted in three research phases: pre-action, action implementation, and action evaluation. Data collection was accomplished through surveys and semi-structured interviews, allowing for data analysis utilizing two approaches: qualitative analysis employing content analysis and quantitative analysis involving descriptive statistical analysis and effectiveness testing. The study outlines five stages of learning, which are summarized in the acronym PEACE: Promotion, Elaboration, Actualization, Communication, and Evaluation. These steps improved religious moderation attitudes in four aspects: maintaining harmonious relationships with other people, respecting people's differences, demonstrating tolerance and rejecting fanaticism, and thinking ahead. To conclude, the PEACE method proved highly effective in cultivating religious moderation attitudes, with the average N-Gain score exceeding 0.7 at 0.7653 and an N-Gain percent of 76.7%. The development of religious moderation attitudes from the perspective of other religions can be explored in future research.

Keywords: character education; religious moderation; tolerance; learning methods; action research

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1. Introduction

A country with religious and cultural diversity, such as Indonesia, requires efforts to foster public understanding and awareness of the significance of developing inclusive attitudes and perspectives toward accepting diversity as a valuable asset rather than a source of conflict to be contested (Menchik, 2016). One strategy for promoting understanding and awareness is through education, particularly in the school context (Rohmah et al., 2018; Suherman et al., 2019). This is crucial, given that recent cases in high schools have exhibited troubling trends that pose a potential threat to the harmony of religious diversity. For example, there was a case emerged of non-Muslim female students being forced to wear hijabs at a vocational high school in Padang (Suyanto, 2021). In 2022, the deputy principal at one state school in Jakarta attempted to hinder a non-Muslim candidate from becoming the Student Council President (Sani, 2022). The incidents align with SETARA Institute research findings on the rising intolerance among high school students (Hasani, 2023). Addressing this issue underscores the importance of integrating moderate religious values into the educational process as the character education (Fakhruddin, 2014) plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' character (Supriadi et al., 2022).

Several studies on religious moderation in schools have been conducted. Hanafi et al., (2022) delved into students' religious literacy and how they derive insights about religious moderation from Qur'anic verses. They found that students' proficient in translation skills and nuanced diction choices can extensively interpret Qur'anic verses, broadening their grasp of religious moderation. Additionally, Subchi et al. (2022) explored factors influencing religious moderation, with religiosity having a positive impact. This suggests that religious intellect, ideology, practices, and experiences contribute to adopting a moderate stance, helping counteract intolerance and radicalism. Socio-economic factors, including gender and parental income, also play a significant role. Furthermore, Syarif, (2021) examined religious moderation teachings from a Sufism perspective, highlighting values such as maintaining harmonious relationships, respecting differences, demonstrating tolerance and rejecting fanaticism, and thinking ahead, which enhance Quranic interpretation, reasoning, understanding, and professional skills.

While existing research analyzes religious moderation phenomena and influencing factors, practical methods for instilling these attitudes in students, applicable by teachers, remain unexplored. This study aims to bridge the gap by identifying practical steps for nurturing students' religious moderation, ultimately within the educational environment. In addition, this study contributes to the effort of identifying effective learning steps in cultivating attitudes of religious moderation in students. Consequently, it is formulated around this research question: "What are the effective learning steps in fostering an attitude of religious moderation in the context of Islamic education?"

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Religious Moderation

At a conceptual level, religious moderation can be defined as maintaining a balanced religious understanding and attitude that avoids extreme positions on the ideological spectrum. This middle ground is marked by four key indicators: commitment to the nation, tolerance, non-violence, and respect for local culture (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021). Essentially, religious moderation strives to strike a balanced approach between a rigid conservative stance and a more liberal one when addressing societal issues (Dodego & Witro, 2020; Rasidin et al., 2021). Contemporary society often witnesses negative attitudes such as excessive rhetoric, closed-mindedness towards other groups, and extreme actions, including violence, which disrupt lives (Hernawan et al. 2021; Shihab 2019). In Islamic terminology, the equivalent term for moderation is "*washatihyyah*", derived from "*wasath*", signifying the middle ground between two extremes guided by principles of justice (Dodego & Witro, 2020). This concept reflects three core characteristics of Islam: "*tawasuth*" (middle), "*ta'adul*" (fair), and "*tawazun*" (balanced) (Pajarianto et al., 2022). The goal of religious moderation is to foster an environment of tolerance, peace, and harmony within both religion and society, while also supporting multicultural coexistence (Dodego & Witro, 2020) . Theologically, the attitude of tawasuth or moderation is exemplified in Islam through God's command found in QS. Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143, which translates as: "And so We have made you (believers) a moderate community so that you may be witnesses over humanity and that the Messenger may be a witness over you..." (Kementrian Agama, 2012). This verse unequivocally affirms that religious moderation is an integral part of Islamic teachings (Pajarianto et al., 2022).

2.2. Religious Moderation and Education Policy in Indonesia

Religious moderation has emerged as a crucial agenda in both developed and developing countries, especially in societies characterized by religious diversity. In Indonesia, as a developing and multicultural nation, the promotion of religious moderation has been integrated into the national medium-term development plan (Pajarianto et al., 2023). A manifestation of this commitment is the government's implementation of a character education program across various educational levels, integrated into the school curriculum. This program is centered on five core character values aimed at preparing the "2045 golden generation" (Suherman et al., 2019) as the generation from which Indonesia will benefit due to the increasing demographic advantage. This is because Indonesia's population structure in 2045 is expected to be dominated by the younger generation, which possesses the potential to contribute to the nation's progress and advancement (Rokhman et al., 2014; Saripudin et al., 2022). One of the pivotal values emphasized within this character education program is the religious character (Muhtar et al., 2020), where religiosity, as a fundamental value, plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' attitudes toward religious moderation (Subchi et al., 2022).

2.3. School Religious Moderation Character Education

A central strategy for shaping an individual's character is education. Education not only imparts knowledge but also plays a fundamental role in instilling values

(Abdussalam et al., 2021). Within the educational process, several values of religious moderation are crucial to nurture a moderate character. These values should be integrated into the learning experience and educational materials, which encompass 1) maintaining harmonious relationships with other people, 2) respecting people's differences, 3) demonstrating tolerance and rejecting fanaticism, and 4) thinking ahead (Subchi et al., 2022). Incorporating these four values into school curricula is imperative to promote religious moderation in Student's character development.

3. Method
3.1. Research Type
Action research is selected as the appropriate research methodology to achieve the research objectives and address the context of the problem under investigation. Given the problem's nature centering on developing a moderate attitude among students confronted with religious diversity and varying interpretations, the aim is to identify a solution (Creswell, 2012). Action research is an apt choice for this study, as it delves into practical issues with the explicit purpose of devising solutions. Furthermore, action research is widely employed by academics to address pedagogical issues (Syahid et al., 2023; Tran, 2009)

3.2. Collaborative Aspect
As a characteristic of the action research design, this study emphasizes collaboration (Supriyadi, Julia, & Iswara, 2019) and actively involves religious teachers from five schools where students are enrolled. To foster collaboration, we initially communicated the study's requirements and objectives to these teachers, offering them the opportunity to participate in various research stages. As a result, five dedicated teachers from high schools in Bandung City, West Java, Indonesia expressed their willingness to engage in the research process. Through this collaborative effort, we jointly formulated indicators to measure the values of religious moderation. The resulting formula is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 : Religious Moderation Attitude Instrument

No	Moderation Aspect	Indicators
1	Maintaining harmonious relationships	1. Interact with friends from various religious backgrounds 2. Seek to discuss and repair disturbed relations between different religious or ethnic groups
2	Respecting differences	1. Accept and respect the religious beliefs and practices of others without judgment or condescension 2. Appreciate religious and cultural diversity as wealth and a source of strength for society
3	Demonstrating tolerance and rejecting fanaticism	1. Reject religious understandings or practices that preach hatred, violence, or fanaticism as a way to promote religious beliefs 2. Provide opportunities for friends with different beliefs and understandings to carry out rites based on their beliefs and understandings

| 4 | Thinking ahead | 1. | Understand that religious teachings must also be translated into concrete actions that prioritize social justice, humanity, and concern for others |
| | | 2. | Actively engage in constructive dialogue and discussions with adherents of other religions to understand their views and share understanding of each other's beliefs |

3.3. Research Procedure

Action Research implementation comprises three distinct stages: pre-action analysis, action implementation, and post-action analysis. These stages are consistent with previous research methodologies (Julia & Isrokatun, 2019; Syahid & Hernawan, 2023). In the pre-action analysis stage, a comprehensive assessment of students' attitudes toward religious moderation was conducted through surveys. This crucial step served as a baseline for understanding the existing attitudes and laid the foundation for formulating action plans. During the action implementation stage, the previously formulated steps and strategies were put into action. The third and final stages of the research process involves an evaluation of the actions taken. The outcomes of the implemented measures and the extent of their impact on students' attitudes toward religious moderation were assessed. The matrix of the three steps is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Research Procedures and Activities

Phase	Activity
Pre-action	Mapping the initial condition of the students and performing a needs analysis
Implementing the actions	Planning, implementing, monitoring, and reflecting (continuous improvement cycle)
Evaluating the actions	Evaluating and analyzing the overall outcomes of the actions

3.4. Research Participation and Site

This study involved 50 students from two well-known high schools in Bandung, West Java Province, Indonesia. This number was obtained using a purposive sampling technique. These students share common characteristics, such as active participation in spiritual organizations and a strong passion for religious education. The schools were selected because of their government ownership and a history of achievements in the religious domain. A survey was conducted among 50 students chose to participate in the subsequent stages of the study. The demographic details of these students are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Participant Demographics

	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	32	64%
Female	18	36%
School Origin		
State High School X Bandung	25	50%
State High School Y Bandung	25	50%
Grade		

10	10	20%
11	22	44%
12	18	36%

Bandung City was chosen as the research location due to its affordability and accessibility. Being the capital of West Java, it offers convenient transportation and resources for research. Additionally, this city was selected due to its higher prevalence of intolerance and radicalism in West Java. In 2020, West Java ranked among the lowest three provinces in the religious tolerance index, scoring 68.5, below the national average of 73.83 (Nurwidiawati, 2022).

3.5. Data Collection

Data collection in this study employed two methods: survey method and semi-structured interview method. Google Forms was chosen as the platform for conducting surveys due to its ease of data distribution and collection (Mondal et al., 2018; Vasantha Raju & Harinarayana, 2016). The survey was a collaborative effort with teachers, in which its link was disseminated to students by teachers, primarily via WhatsApp groups. The survey questions encompassed four aspects of moderation values, namely 1) maintaining harmonious relationships with other people, 2) respecting people's differences, 3) demonstrating tolerance and rejecting fanaticism, and 4) thinking ahead. Following the survey, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in the second stage to delve deeper into the survey results and explore in-depth information. Ethical considerations were upheld throughout the research process. Participants were provided with comprehensive information about the research objectives, procedures, and potential benefits and risks. They were given sufficient time to deliberate on their participation and were encouraged to participate voluntarily.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved two distinct techniques. Quantitative data underwent analysis using quantitative methods, specifically employing descriptive analysis to elucidate the nature of participants' religious moderation. On the other hand, qualitative data obtained from interviews were subjected to qualitative analysis using the thematic inductive method, which involved coding facilitated by NVivo 12 Plus software.

To ensure the reliability and rigor of the qualitative analysis, triangulation was employed. Triangulation serves to mitigate bias by cross-verifying the authenticity of participants' responses (Anney, 2014). Throughout the research process, triangulation was carried out through the active involvement of three researchers. Regular conferences and focus group discussions were conducted at all research stages to enhance the dependability of the study (Patton, 2014). The credibility and dependability of the data is evident in the use of data collection instruments that reference relevant literature. The design of these instruments involved collaboration with a team of religious teachers. Concerning the credibility of the interview data, clarification was achieved through member checking with students, ensuring that the transcriptions accurately represented their intended statements (Lincoln et al., 1985).

3.7. Instrument Validity and Reliability Tests

The primary instrument utilized in this study is an attitude assessment tool employing a Likert scale to evaluate students' attitudes toward religious moderation. This instrument encompasses four facets of moderation, comprising a total of eight indicators. Each indicator is represented by two attitude statements, resulting in a set of 16 questions for assessment.

Prior to the study, the validity and reliability of these questionnaire items were assessed on a group of 20 non-participating students. The evaluation of questionnaire items was performed using SPSS software. The results of these validity and reliability tests are presented in Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4: Question Item Validity Test Results

		Q 1	Q 2	Q3	Q 4	Q5	Q6	Q 7	Q 8	Q 9	Q10	Q 11	Q 12	Q 13	Q 14	Q 15	Q16	Total
Total	Pearson Correlation	.712**	.658**	.712**	.672**	.670**	.636**	.572**	.672**	.854**	.854**	.572**	.505*	.576**	.455*	.695**	.778**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.000	.001	.001	.003	.008	.001	.000	.000	.008	.023	.008	.044	.001	.000	
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

Table 5: Reliability Test Results

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.914	16

Based on Table 4 above, the R-value for was calculated using the formula (N-2) = 18, resulting in an R-value of 0.4683. To determine validation, if the Pearson correlation value exceeds 0.4683, it is considered valid; if it is below 0.4683, it is considered invalid. All the question items above have Pearson correlation values greater than 0.4683, confirming the validity of the 18 question items.

The results of the Cronbach's alpha test, as indicated in Table 5, yielded a score of 0.914. In decision-making, if the alpha value is above 0.7, it is considered valid; if it is below 0.7, it is considered invalid. Based on the reliability test of the 16 questions, an alpha score of 0.914 was obtained, indicating it is above 0.7. Thus, the 16 questions in this study are both valid and reliable.

3.8. Categorization of Moderation Character Assessment

To map religious attitudes, a reference formulation for assessment categorization was developed by the researchers in collaboration with a team of collaborators and teachers from the schools. The assessment references are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Average Score Reference for Moderation Character Assessment

Scale	Attitude Level Categories	Meaning of Attitude
1.00-1.80	Very Low	Highly Not Moderate
1.81-2.60	Low	Not Moderate
2.61-3.40	Moderate	Fairly Moderate
3.41-4.20	High	Moderate
4.21-5.00	Very High	Highly Moderate

4. Result

4.1. Pre-Action Analysis

In this stage, a survey was administered to 50 participants to assess the objective level of their moderation character. The survey results analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Results of Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Religious Moderation Characteristics at the Pre-Action Stage

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I can be friends with anyone, including those with different religious beliefs from me	50	2	3	2.52	.505
2. When friends from different religions talk about their religious views, I am the one who can listen thoroughly.	50	2	3	2.28	.454
3. I enjoy sharing experiences and knowledge about religion with friends of the same religion or those of different religions because this can improve harmonious relations between religions.	50	3	4	3.20	.404
4. I believe that it is not permissible to preach to people who already have other beliefs to follow the religion that I believe in.	50	1	2	1.50	.505
5. I am open to studying other religions in order to achieve mutual understanding so as to create harmony among religious adherents.	50	1	2	1.64	.485
6. If I were a public official, I would attend celebrations of other religious holidays when invited.	50	1	4	1.54	.788
7. I believe that the diversity of religions and traditions carried out by all religions cannot be separated from the will of God who created these differences.	50	2	3	2.68	.471
8. I believe that religious and cultural diversity is a wealth and strength that must be maintained.	50	4	4	4.00	0.000
9. I believe that every religious follower has the right to establish a place of worship anywhere, including in my neighborhood.	50	1	2	1.46	.503
10. I believe that every religion or religious ideology has symbols that are respected by its adherents, and we must not act or say things that offend its adherents.	50	3	4	3.30	.463
11. I believe that we need to remind friends of different religions to carry out worship according to their beliefs.	50	3	4	3.36	.485
12. I believe that we need to give people of different beliefs and religious views the opportunity to practice worship based on their beliefs.	50	2	4	2.82	.560

13. If I were an architect, and asked to build a house of worship for another religion, I would be willing.	50	1	2	1.32	.471
14. Collaboration between religious followers needs to be improved in resolving social and moral problems in society.	50	2	3	2.48	.505
15. I believe that for harmony to grow among religious followers, it is necessary to hold religious dialogue and discussions between religious leaders.	50	3	4	3.24	.431
16. I enjoy discussing with friends of different religions to understand their views about their religion.	50	1	2	1.86	.351
Valid N (listwise)	**50**				
Average Mean Score				**2.45**	

Table 7 indicates that, among the 16 questions presented, the average score for all these questions related to moderation is 2.45. Referring to Table 5, which provides the mean score assessment, this value falls within the low level category, suggesting that their inclination toward moderation at the pre-action stage is not moderate.

To deepen the insights gained from the survey analysis, researchers conducted interviews with 10 participants who were considered as leaders within their respective groups. The interview questions focused on exploring information related to their responses to questions 4, 5, 6, 9, and 13. These specific questions were chosen because their responses garnered a score of 1 (Strongly disagree). From the interview, a total of 178 statements were generated from participants, forming three overarching themes. Visually, the results of the interview data analysis, facilitated by NVivo 12 plus, can be depicted in the following diagram.
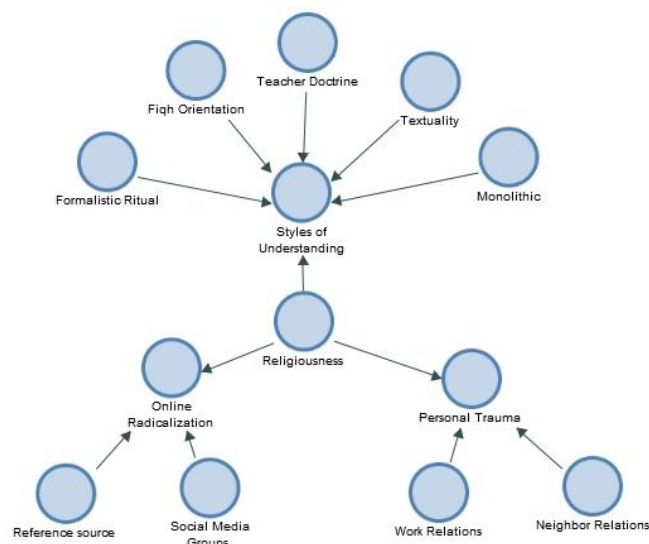

Figure 1: Factors that Influence Student Religiosity

The conceptual map presented above illustrates the factors that influence participants' responses to statements 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, and 16. These responses were

influenced by three main factors: styles of understanding religion, personal trauma, and online radicalism.

Concerning their style of understanding, participants exhibit five distinct styles of understanding. The first is "monolithic", characterized by an ideology that insists others must share the same beliefs or understanding because of a claim to absolute truth. "Monolithic" implies an unvaried, rigid, one-way perspective that is resistant to change (Ahyar, 2018). This perspective aligns with the responses given when asked why they strongly disagree with statement 4. Two students provided the following answers:

> *"This religion is the truest, so other followers must be taught to follow what I believe because it is the true religion." (Student 3).*

> *"According to my teacher, the religion that I believe in requires me to call on unbelievers to join the religion that I believe in totally, so we have to preach to people outside our religion." (Student 8)*

In addition, with regards to their reasons for disagreeing with statement 5, it reflects a textualist style of understanding and adherence to their teacher's doctrine. This is evident in the responses of two students:

> *"My religion teaches, as God says, 'to you is your religion and to me is my religion.' This is the foundation for me as to why we should study or deepen our own religion. It's better to thoroughly understand our own religion." (Student 17)*

> *"According to my teacher and information from various social media sources and the internet, studying other religions can influence my beliefs in the religion I adhere to. Since I believe that my religion is the correct one, I choose to focus solely on studying my own faith." (Student 21)*

The reasons they provide for their disagreement with statement 6 appear to be rooted in a *Fiqh*-oriented understanding (religious understanding based on the opinion of a scholar) and a formalistic approach to rituals. This is evident in the responses of two students:

> *"According to the ulama (religious scholars), we should not partake in such events because, in their view, whoever resembles a group becomes part of that group. Holiday ceremonies are considered rites, and, therefore, even if I were to hold a public office, I would not compromise my beliefs for the sake of perceived respect." (Student 18)*

> *"Attending the religious ceremonies of other people is prohibited in my religion, as it aligns with various Fiqh statements that equate it with acknowledging and endorsing the truth of another religion." (Student 25)*

Furthermore, regarding statement 9, their responses tend to be rooted in traumatic experiences and exposure to hate speech. Several students strongly disagreed for various reasons:

> *"When constructing a place of worship, it is essential to consider the religious beliefs of the majority in the area. People of different religions must also take this into account to prevent conflicts and disturbances in the community. This perspective aligns with information I've*

encountered online and on social media, which suggests that followers of other religions often impose their beliefs without respecting the local residents' faith." (Student 9)

"Houses of worship hold symbolic significance in religion and have specific missions, as I've learned from sources on the internet and social media. People outside my faith are considered infidels. Therefore, I feel the need to safeguard the beliefs of the majority in the community from these infidels. It's better to prevent potential issues rather than having to deal with them later." (Student 18)

"I've personally experienced living in an area where the majority did not share my faith. When our congregation attempted to construct a place of worship, the local community vehemently opposed it. Consequently, I relocated to an environment where the majority shares my faith. I now intend to act similarly to how they treated our fellow believers back then." (Student 31)

Regarding statement 13, their disagreement was rooted in several reasons:

"My family once encountered a situation where they were asked to help build a house by neighbors who did not share their faith. Over time, the house transformed into a place of worship, and my family was subsequently ostracized by society for being perceived as assisting in constructing a place of worship for another religion." (Student 14)

"Constructing a place of worship for another religion is viewed in my religion as tantamount to endorsing and recognizing the truth of that religion. This is strictly prohibited in my faith, as per the sources I've read, and my teacher's guidance emphasizes that our knowledge should be used to promote our own religion. Hence, there's a concern that our knowledge could inadvertently support the advancement of other religions." (Student 22)

4.2. Pre-Action Evaluation

The survey suggests immoderate attitudes among students. Interview findings reveal three causal factors contributing to this lack of religious moderation:

1. Monolithic, Textual, and Jurisprudential Understanding of Religion: Students often adopt a monolithic religious perspective influenced by their teachers. Their focus is on formalistic rites and jurisprudential nuances, leading to an emphasis on human-God relations and contributing to immoderate attitudes.
2. Limited Literacy Levels: Insufficient exposure to diverse perspectives and knowledge impacts their perception of differences, hindering their understanding and appreciation of religious diversity.
3. Negative Experiences: Some students have had bitter or traumatic interactions with those of different religious beliefs, reinforcing immoderate attitudes.

This evaluation outcomes serve as a foundation for formulating action plans aimed at enhancing students' attitudes of religious moderation.

4.3 Action Implementation

4.3.1. *Promoting the values of moderation*

At this stage, a class meeting of 50 students with the primary aim of imparting an understanding of the concepts and values of religious moderation was carried out. In this context, "values" refer to conceptions of what is desirable, influencing the selection of means, intermediate goals, final objectives of actions, fundamental beliefs, general behavioral guidelines, and serving as a standard by which certain actions are deemed good or desirable (Halstead & Taylor, 2005). During these meetings, students delved into the values of religious moderation across various topics. These discussions encompassed the meaning, objectives, urgency, and values of religious moderation, drawing from key reference sources in Islamic teachings. Topics included tolerance, balance, equality, peace, justice, humanity, countering radicalism and fanaticism, as well as respecting religious freedom within Indonesia's multicultural and multireligious context. The religious moderation conceptualization was spread across three meetings within two weeks. Following each meeting, students were tasked with creating quotes that promote the values of moderation. These quotes were then transformed into posters and widely disseminated through various social media platforms. An example of one such product quote is illustrated in Figure 2, featuring the expression: "those who are not brothers in faith are brothers in humanity."

Figure 2: Promotional poster for the values of moderation.

Activities were conducted to assess their comprehension of the concept of religious moderation within Islamic teachings framework. Various evaluation methods were employed, including multiple-choice and essay questions presented in a quiz format through the Google Form platform. The assessment outcomes revealed that 83.5% of the students demonstrated a relatively high level of understanding of the concept and values of religious moderation in Islam.

4.3.2. *Elaboration of Religious Moderation Values through Literacy Activities*

Following the initial step, the subsequent stage involves a comprehensive exploration of the values associated with religious moderation. This process entails a deep and thorough process of examining, elucidating, and comprehending how these values can shape students' attitudes and perspectives concerning specific topics or situations (Laufer et al., 2010; Saputera, 2022). Students connected the conceptual values they have acquired with social and religious issues in their surroundings through literacy-related activities. It is worth noting that there is a significant correlation between an individual's

religious attitudes and their literacy skills (Hanafi et al., 2022; Nyanasuryanadi et al., 2023). During this stage, students were guided by teachers to investigate into specific issues presented in a paper. The process consists of 11 stages, as outlined in Table 8.

Table 8: Stages of Elaboration of Moderation Values through Literacy Activities

No	Task	Task Description
1	Define the Topic or Situation to be Elaborated	Determine the specific topic or situation to be researched. For example, understanding how religious values moderate people's views on environmental issues.
2	Identify Related Religious Values	Identify religious values that are relevant to the chosen topic or situation. For example, environmental issues, values such as cleanliness, natural balance, and responsibility towards God's creation.
3	Literature Study	Undertake a literature study to gain a deeper understanding of how certain religious values influence behavior and views in the context of a chosen issue.
4	Interview or Survey	Gather information from sources to gain a deeper understanding of how certain religious values influence behavior and views in the context of the selected issue.
5	Data Analysis	Analyze data that has been collected, whether from literature, interviews, or surveys. Identify patterns or findings that show how religious values influence individual views and behavior in a particular context.
6	Classification of Religious Values	Classify religious values into more specific groups or categories. For example, in findings on environmental issues, religious values consider nature preservation and cleanliness to be the most important, so these are classified as such.
7	Connect with Views and Behavior	Explain how the religious values identified in the previous step influence individual views and behavior towards the topic or situation being studied. Illustrate with a concrete example.
8	Discussion and Implications	Discuss the implications of the findings regarding how understanding the moderation of religious values can contribute to a better understanding of people's views and behavior in certain contexts.
9	Consideration of Context and Variation	Consider contextual factors such as culture, traditions, and different religious interpretations because religious values can be interpreted differently in different communities.
10	Conclusions and Recommendations	Draw conclusions based on the findings and provide recommendations for further study or practical implications that may arise from a deeper understanding of the values of religious moderation.
11	Presentation of Results	Present findings in the form of scientific writing, presentations, and other formats appropriate for the intended audience.

The aforementioned steps contribute to the cultivation of a more profound understanding of how the values of religious moderation exert an influence on students' perspectives and attitudes within specific situations or contexts.

4.3.3. Actualization of Moderation values

Actualizing the values of religious moderation requires sustained effort, demanding commitment from both individuals and society to foster a more peaceful, tolerant, and harmonious world among diverse religious beliefs (Sholeh, 2023; Wibowo & Nurjanah, 2021). This commitment plays a crucial role in promoting interfaith harmony and constructing an inclusive society (Qatrunnada et al., 2021; Sutrisno, 2019). This stage follows the previous stage, as the understanding gained in the second stage forms the basis for perception. A person's behavior is largely determined by the perception they hold (Julia et al., 2022; Kosasih et al., 2021). In this stage, students were tasked with organizing and planning social projects through humanitarian activities that foster cooperation among diverse students. Collaborative projects serve to strengthen positive relationships and mutual understanding among these students. The theme for collaborative activities was "We are All Brothers and Sisters". Students were divided into 10 groups of 5. Each group developed proposals for humanitarian activities involving members of different religious groups, fostering cooperation among these groups. The results of field observations and activity reports, in response to the proposals they submitted, confirmed the alignment of their proposals and activities. Some visual documentations of their activities are presented in the following Figure 3.

Figure 3: Delivery of Humanitarian Social Assistance to Orphanages

4.3.4 Interfaith Communication

Interfaith communication aims to ensure sustainable harmonious relationships. The primary objective here is to foster dialogical communication among different religions. To achieve this, the study of religions is integrated as a means of reinforcing moderation education. This is crucial for promoting understanding, tolerance, and harmony among different religious traditions while contributing to the endeavor to promote moderation values and mitigate religious extremism. Within this program, comparative religious studies are utilized to explore both the similarities and differences between religions, facilitating a broader perspective and deeper understanding. Students conduct direct interviews with religious figures, exploring the creedal, ritual, and moral dimensions of religion. After gathering information about these aspects, students are guided to identify both the similarities and differences within these dimensions among different religions.

4.3.5 Evaluation

The evaluation stage concludes the process, assessing students' religious moderation characters after completing all activities. It aims to measure the extent to which students have embraced and applied moderation values through their educational experiences. In this stage, students were encouraged to engage in reflective exercises on their learning experiences, promoting a deeper understanding of religious beliefs and practices that endorse interfaith harmony and tolerance. They used a reflection form via Google Form, covering four key aspects: respect for diversity, understanding of other religions, attitudes toward extremism, and potential inter-religious collaboration programs. The results indicated the effective internalization of religious moderation values. Following this reflection stage, 50 participants completed another survey to assess their moderation characters post-action. The survey results are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9: The Character of Religious Moderation at the Post Action Stage

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	50	4	5	4.24	.431
Q2	50	3	5	4.06	.314
Q3	50	4	5	4.36	.485
Q4	50	4	5	4.12	.328
Q5	50	4	5	4.08	.274
Q6	50	1	4	3.94	.424
Q7	50	4	5	4.38	.490
Q8	50	4	5	4.64	.485
Q9	50	4	5	4.10	.303
Q10	50	4	5	4.46	.503
Q11	50	4	5	4.26	.443
Q12	50	4	5	4.16	.370
Q13	50	4	5	4.04	.198
Q14	50	4	5	4.08	.274
Q15	50	4	5	4.30	.463
Q16	50	4	5	4.04	.198
Valid N (listwise)	50				
Average Mean				**4.20**	

Table 9 above shows an average value for the 16 questions related to moderation, indicating a score of 4.20. In reference to Table 5, which provides the mean score assessment, this score value indicates a high level, signifying that the tendency for their moderation characters at the post-action stage leans towards being moderate.

4.4. Post Action Evaluation

The evaluation results from the five action steps provided indicate notable differences and changes in attitudes between the pre-action and post-action stages, specifically a shift from a non-moderate attitude to a moderate one. This enhancement, when examined across the four aspects of moderation and

compared between the pre-action and post-action stages, can be visually represented as shown in Figure 4 below.
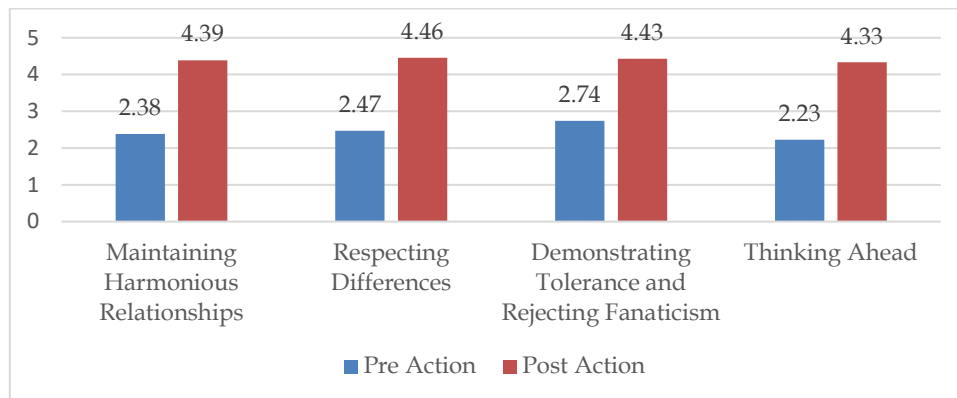

Figure 4: Value of Pre-Action and Post-Action Moderation Aspects

Figure 4 illustrates the moderate attitudes elevation in each aspect. In the first aspect, maintaining harmonious relationships, there was an increase from a low level with a score of 2.38 to a high level with a score of 4.39. This signifies that the level of moderation in the first aspect falls within the high or moderate category. In the second aspect, respecting differences, there was an increase from a low level of moderation with an average score of 2.47 to a very high level with a score of 4.46, indicating very high or highly moderate attitude. In the third aspect, demonstrating tolerance and rejecting fanaticism, there was an increase from a moderate level with an average score of 2.74 to a very high level with a score of 4.43, indicating that in the third aspect, the participants' attitude of moderation is very high or highly moderate. In the fourth aspect, thinking ahead, there was an increase from a low level of 2.23 to a high level with a score of 4.33, suggesting that the level of moderation in this fourth aspect is high or moderate.

5. Discussion

Based on the above findings, five learning action steps are designed to nurture moderation in students. These steps include 1) Promoting: Promoting moderation values; 2) Elaborating: Deepening understanding of moderation values through literacy activities; 3) Actualization of values: Practicing moderation values through cross-religious collaboration; 4) Communication: Engaging in interfaith dialogue through comparative religious studies; and 5) Evaluating: Reflecting on the learning experiences. These five steps are collectively summarized in the acronym PEACE, representing a learning objective to foster peace within diversity (Muhtifah et al., 2021; Prayitno et al., 2020). PEACE, therefore, serves as a method of learning, as the cultivation of character values necessitates a structured approach (Lickona, 1991).

The evaluation results above demonstrated that the PEACE steps effectively promote religious moderation values through teaching, habituation, and direct involvement. Through these steps, students developed moderate character values, leading to the adoption of a moderate attitude. This effectiveness is supported by the results of the N-Gain test presented in Table 10.

Table 10: N-Gain Test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
N-Gain_Score	50	.66	.84	.7653	.03935
N-Gain_Percent	50	65.85	84.21	76.5269	3.93462
Valid N (listwise)	50				

Table 10 shows an N-Gain score of 0.7653, indicating high effectiveness according to Mizrachi et al. (2020). This signifies that the PEACE method was highly effective in shaping students' religious moderation characters, with an N-Gain score exceeding 0.7. The N-Gain Percent score is 76.5269%, falling into the effective category according to Hake (2002). This further confirms the PEACE method's effectiveness in fostering students' religious moderation characters, representing a 76.52% increase in moderation characters through this approach.

This success can be attributed to government's religious education program mandated by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (Sobri, 2019). Religious education is a mandatory in the school curriculum, promoting diversity through activities such as the studies of the Qur'an, hadith, jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), and ethics (Ainiyah, 2013; Samrin, 2015). These learning materials are integrated with the Islamic ideals of *wasathiyyah*, emphasizing "*tawassuth*, *ta'adul*, and *tawazzun*," and delivered through critical and contextual learning methods (Husna & Thohir, 2020; Panggayuh et al., 2022).

In this study, religious education focuses on character development through integrating religious scriptures with real-life situations and upholding universal principles of compassion and peace (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021; Sholeh, 2023). Consequently, religious education geared towards reinforcing religious moderation serves as a tool to nurture individuals who can think critically and act intelligently, rather than becoming blindly devoted to the religious ideas of a particular individual or group without considering the religious perspectives of others (Ekawati et al., 2019; Ghannouchi, 2020). This approach ensures that religious ideas remain flexible and open-minded when acknowledging religious diversity (Byrne, 2014). Religious moderation aids individuals in following Islamic principles in a balanced and tolerant manner (Naumenko & Naumenko, 2016).

The findings from the PEACE steps should be implemented as a practical effort to help students comprehend religion beyond dogmatic and doctrinaire perspectives (Supriyadi, Julia, & Firdaus, 2019). Instead, it encourages them to embrace the values of *wasathiyyah* in their daily lives by acknowledging differences and diversity, especially regarding *khilafiyah* issues in Islamic teachings (Parker, 2014). Furthermore, this approach should extend beyond the Muslim community to include accepting and tolerating the differences among adherents of other religions in educational settings by providing them with the space to practice their faith (Ma'arif, 2019; Manado, 2022). Religious education should align with a framework of "pluralism" through the values of *ta'adul* in religious moderation, not as theoretical knowledge but as daily practices.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that religious moderation is a crucial attitude to be cultivated within the context of a multi-religious society. Achieving this goal is possible through the educational process by fostering religious moderation character. Thus, there are five essential steps to be implemented to nurture the moderation characters, encapsulated into the acronym PEACE: Promotion, Elaboration, Actualization, Communication, and Evaluation. The study demonstrates that these steps led to a significant increase in moderation characters by 76.56% signifying the PEACE method's effectiveness in enhancing students' religious moderation characters. The implications of the steps summarized in the acronym PEACE promote students' understanding of respecting differences in religion and belief. Through these steps, they can acquire.

7. Suggestion

The findings demonstrate the method's effectiveness summarized in the acronym PEACE. Religious education teachers are recommended to incorporate this method into the learning process at school. Teachers have the option to implement or adapt the method through an action research approach to suit their specific educational contexts and goals.

8. Limitation

This study has limitations related to the high school environment in which it was conducted. However, it offers opportunities for academics and educators to adapt and further develop the PEACE method for use in different educational levels and contexts. Additionally, it is worth noting that this study focuses on moderation within Islamic values context, and its applicability to other religious or cultural contexts may require adjustments and further exploration.

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10. References

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