

Cultivating Harmony: Implementing Religious Moderation in A Multicultural School

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Harmony, Multicultural School, Religious Moderation	This study investigates the implementation of religious moderation values at SMP Negeri 2 Slahung, a school characterized by its diverse student body comprising Muslims and Catholics, to explore practical strategies for promoting harmony and unity in a multicultural educational environment. The research employed qualitative research, the study utilized descriptive methods including non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The study employed a qualitative case study approach; data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Participants comprised Islamic education teachers, Catholic religion teachers, the school principal, and representatives from Muslim and Catholic student groups. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana method, which involved data collection, condensation, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that SMP Negeri 2 Slahung has made notable progress in promoting religious moderation through its inclusive curriculum and regular intercultural activities. Supporting factors include the professionalism of the teaching staff and the school's commitment to building a solid religious culture. However, challenges such as the influence of social media, the minority status of non-Muslim students, and family-related religious differences pose significant hurdles. The insights gained contribute to the broader understanding of fostering religious harmony and unity in multicultural educational settings.
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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, a nation rich in cultural and religious diversity,¹ exemplifies the challenges and opportunities of living harmoniously in a multicultural society. The country's diverse landscape includes various customs, languages, ethnicities, and religions, making it a vibrant yet complex tapestry of human interaction. This diversity is a valuable asset that, when managed wisely, can foster unity and mutual respect. However, managing such diversity requires a deliberate and thoughtful approach, particularly in educational settings where young minds are shaped.²

Religious moderation, a concept that promotes balance, tolerance, and mutual respect³ among different faiths, is crucial in navigating these challenges. It calls for an approach that harmonizes one's own religious beliefs with respect for the beliefs of others, fostering an environment where differences are tolerated and appreciated. This approach aligns with the Indonesian philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, meaning unity in diversity, which underscores the importance of solidarity despite differences.⁴

Implementing religious moderation in a multicultural school environment is essential to cultivating harmony. Schools serve as a microcosm of society, reflecting its diversity and complexities. By instilling the principles of religious moderation, schools can create inclusive environments where students learn to respect and appreciate one another's differences. It is essential in Indonesia, where instances of religious intolerance still occur, sometimes fueled by socio-economic and political factors.

For example, at SMP Negeri 2 Slahung, a school with students from various religious backgrounds, including Muslims and Catholics, challenges have arisen in ensuring respectful and inclusive communication practices. Such situations highlight the importance of implementing religious moderation to maintain harmony and avoid conflict. Encouraging balanced religious attitudes among students promotes peaceful

¹ Rarasaning Satianingsih, Sunu Catur Budiyo, and Marianus Subandowo, "Character Education in Multicultural Society: Case in Indonesia," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 7, no. 4 (May 30, 2020): 337, <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v7i4.1407>.

² Nasaruddin Umar, *Islam Nusantara: The Long Road of Moderation in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Elex Media Computindo, 2019), 15.

³ RI Kementerian Agama, *The Implementation of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education* (Jakarta: Kelompok Kerja Implementasi Moderasi Beragama Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia Bekerjasama dengan Lembaga Daulat Bangsa, 2019), 5.

⁴ Anne Suryani and A. Bukhori Muslim, "Religious Tolerance, Intellectual Humility, and Democratic Education," in *Embracing Diversity: Preparing Future Teachers to Foster Religious Tolerance*, ed. Anne Suryani and A. Bukhori Muslim (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2024), 13, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-1616-6_2.

coexistence and prepares them to contribute positively to a diverse society.

Religious moderation, or Islam Wasathiyah in the Islamic context, emphasizes justice, balance, and the middle path to avoid extremes.⁵ Principles such as tawassuth (the middle path), tawazun (balance), i'tidal (fairness), and tasamuh (tolerance) are integral to this approach. These principles guide individuals to practice their faith while acknowledging and respecting the presence of other beliefs. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has recognized the importance of religious moderation and incorporated it into national policies, including the National Medium-Term Development Plan 2020-2024.⁶

To effectively implement religious moderation, several key indicators have been identified: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture.⁷ National commitment reflects the dedication of individuals and institutions to upholding the principles of religious moderation at all levels of society. Tolerance involves respecting and accepting the diversity of beliefs and practices within the community. Anti-violence emphasizes the rejection of violence as a means of resolving conflicts and the promotion of peaceful interactions. Accommodation of local culture entails integrating and respecting local customs and traditions within the framework of religious moderation.

Previous studies, such as Zakariyah et al illustrated that moderation values in Islamic education at Al-Fattah Siman Islamic Boarding School highlights that these values are integrated through planning, implementation, and evaluation stages, and are applied in teaching, religious-spiritual, and skill-building activities. Four strategies—introduction, habituation, example, and practice—are used, with evaluations focusing on program effectiveness, learning processes, and outcomes.⁸ While another study from Ma'arif et al. found that religious moderation in the university used experiential,

⁵ Eliza Eliza et al., "Kalam Science and Its Urgency in the Context of Religious Moderation (Islam Wasathiyah)," *IJISH (International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities)* 7, no. 1 (April 30, 2024): 1, <https://doi.org/10.26555/ijish.v7i1.10121>.

⁶ Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Religious Moderation* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 128.

⁷ Muhaemin Muhaemin et al., "Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education as a Response to Intolerance Attitudes in Indonesian Educational Institutions," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 14, no. 2 (June 17, 2023): 253.

⁸ Zakariyah Zakariyah, Umu Fauziyah, and Muhammad Maulana Nur Kholis, "Strengthening the Value of Religious Moderation in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (January 29, 2022): 20, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v3i1.104>.

habituation, emotional, functional, and rational strategies to enhance students' psychomotor and affective skills, employing methods like lectures, discussions, experiments, and assignments to promote moderate Islamic values and *Rahmatan Lil Alamin*.⁹ While these studies provide a broad view of religious moderation within Indonesian society, further exploration is needed on its practical application in specific environments like schools. Understanding how these concepts influence students' attitudes and behaviors can offer valuable insights into fostering tolerance and understanding from a young age.

This research focuses on the practical application of religious moderation within the everyday life of schools, particularly in a multicultural context like that of SMP Negeri 2 Slahung. While these studies provide a broad view of religious moderation within Indonesian society, further exploration is needed on its practical application in specific environments like schools. By focusing on the experiences of SMP Negeri 2 Slahung, this study aims to fill this gap and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how to cultivate harmony and unity in schools with diverse religious communities. By examining how religious moderation can be implemented in school settings, this study aims to provide valuable insights into practical strategies for fostering harmony and unity among students of diverse religious backgrounds. This approach addresses the immediate need for peaceful coexistence in educational institutions and contributes to the broader societal goal of cultivating a more cohesive and harmonious community.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher employed a qualitative research design. According to Creswell, qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups attach to a human or social problem.¹⁰ Additionally, Bogdan and Biklen, as cited by Soraya and Chen, identify five key features of qualitative research: naturalistic, descriptive data, process-oriented, inductive, and meaning-focused.¹¹ Some scholars also refer to these characteristics as the strengths of qualitative

⁹ Muhammad Anas Ma'arif, Muhammad Husnur Rofiq, and Akhmad Sirojuddin, "Implementing Learning Strategies for Moderate Islamic Religious Education in Islamic Higher Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (June 6, 2022): 75, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v8i1.19037>.

¹⁰ J. W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th Ed.) (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2014), 4.

¹¹ Siti Zazak Soraya and Mei-Ying Chen, "Identifying Struggles and Challenges Faced by Indonesian Migrant Workers Pursuing Higher Education in Taiwan," *Journal of Education and Learning*

research. Specifically, the methodological approach of this study utilized a descriptive study. The researcher conducted the research at SMP Negeri 2 Slahung in Ponorogo. This school was chosen because it is a formal educational institution located in a village with a Catholic community. It is situated in an area where Catholicism is prominent, which provides a unique context for examining how religious moderation is implemented in a multicultural setting. The participants were Islamic education teachers, Catholic education teachers, the school principal, representatives of Muslim students, and Catholic students. Data collection techniques involved non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis employed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana method including data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.¹² Data condensation involves selecting, focusing, and reducing the collected data. This stage includes summarizing, coding, and developing themes, starting after data collection and continuing until the final report. The next step, data display, organizes information for more straightforward interpretation using matrices, graphs, and charts. Finally, drawing and verifying conclusions involves structuring findings, cross-referencing data for accuracy, and using triangulation to ensure consistency and credibility.

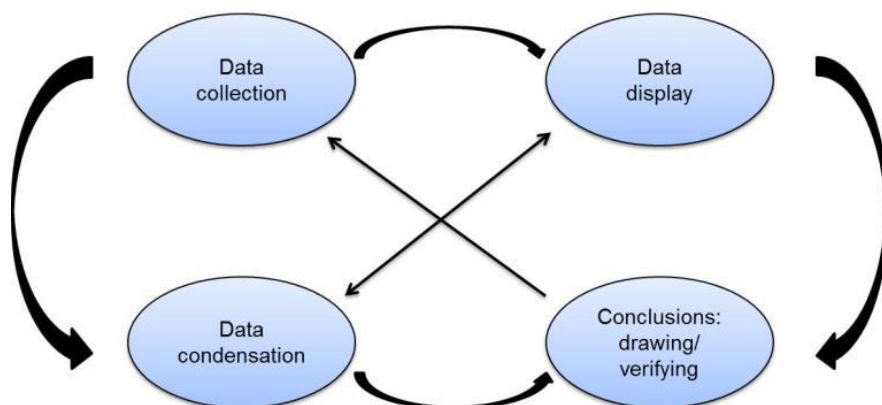


Figure 1. Interactive Model Analysis

Source: *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Method Source Book* (2014)

(*EduLearn*) 16, no. 1 (February 1, 2022): 37, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v16i1.20093>.

¹² J Miles, M. B., Huberman, A.M., Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Method Sourcebook* (3rd Ed.) (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2014), 12.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Religious Moderation at SMP Negeri 2 Slahung

The study reveals that SMP Negeri 2 Slahung has made significant strides in integrating religious moderation principles into its educational framework. This alignment with national commitment is evident through the school's structured approach to fostering an inclusive environment. The school's dedication to national ideals is reflected in its diverse curriculum, which includes content that respects and incorporates various religious and cultural perspectives. By doing so, the school helps to instill a sense of unity and respect among students, regardless of their religious backgrounds.

This aligns with the vision of SMPN 2 Slahung, which is *krida romantika*, an acronym for creative (*kreatif*), innovative (*inovatif*), safe (*aman*), cooperative, based on faith and piety (*gotong royong berlandaskan iman dan taqwa*), independent (*mandiri*), critical thinking (*berpikir kritis*), and global diversity (*berkebhinekaan global*).¹³ This vision reflects the school's support for promoting a creative, innovative, and safe learning environment that is inclusive for all students. Emphasizing cooperation and faith underlines the school's dedication to fostering a community where students work together harmoniously and respect each other's religious beliefs.¹⁴ Hamdani et al. also stated that religious moderation values can be integrated through the school's vision, indicating that a well-defined vision can guide the incorporation of these values into the educational framework, promoting an environment that upholds tolerance and inclusivity.¹⁵

A key aspect of the school's commitment to national values is its adherence to the principles of balance and tolerance. It is evident in how the curriculum is designed to present a balanced view of different religions, ensuring that students understand religious diversity comprehensively. The curriculum includes content from various religious and cultural perspectives, fostering a sense of unity and respect among students. This balanced approach is crucial for helping students develop a broader understanding of the world

¹³ Documentation: 08/05/2024

¹⁴ Maimun Maimun, "Inculcating Multicultural Education Through the Development of Religious Culture in Junior High School (SMP) Negeri 7 Mataram," *SANGKÉP: Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan* 3, no. 2 (August 11, 2020): 225, <https://doi.org/10.20414/sangkep.v3i2.2374>.

¹⁵ Zikrul Hamdani, S. Ali Jadid Al Idrus, and Subki Subki, "Religious Moderation Management in Educational Institutions (A Comparative Study at SMPN 14 Mataram and SMP Dwi Jendra Mataram)," *Jurnal Pendidikan: Riset dan Konseptual* 8, no. 3 (July 22, 2024): 449, https://doi.org/10.28926/riset_konseptual.v8i3.1005.

around them and the diverse beliefs that people hold.¹⁶ By promoting tolerance and understanding, the school prepares students to be respectful and informed citizens in a multicultural society.

In addition to the curriculum, the school also emphasizes the importance of regular ceremonial activities. For instance, the school holds a weekly ceremony every Monday. These ceremonies serve as a platform to reinforce the values of balance, respect, and inclusivity central to the school's mission.¹⁷ They allow the entire school community to come together, reflect on shared values, and celebrate the diversity within the student body.

The commitment to these values is further demonstrated through the experiences of the teachers themselves. As explained, "Here, as a teacher, it's not just about teaching and leaving the class. When non-Muslim students have special lessons with a Catholic teacher, the Catholic teacher must also instill in the students that everyone in this school is part of a family."¹⁸ This statement highlights a holistic approach to teaching, where teachers see their role as extending beyond merely delivering lessons. They also aim to build community and belonging among all students. By nurturing these values, the school actively works towards building a cohesive and harmonious environment where religious diversity is respected and appreciated.

Observations have shown that the school has successfully created a setting where differences in religious beliefs are tolerated and appreciated.¹⁹ This approach is in line with the Indonesian philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which emphasizes unity in diversity. The school's policies and activities, which include celebrating different religious holidays and engaging students in interfaith events, support and strengthen this philosophy. By engaging students in these activities, the school helps them understand and appreciate different religious traditions, fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance.²⁰

¹⁶ Achmad Anwar Abidin and Muhammad Ali Murtadlo, "Curriculum Development of Multicultural-Based Islamic Education as an Effort to Weaver Religious Moderation Values in Indonesia," *International Journal of Islamic Education, Research and Multiculturalism (IJIERM)* 2, no. 1 (September 20, 2020): 29, <https://doi.org/10.47006/ijierm.v2i1.30>.

¹⁷ Ni Wayan Wini Widarini and Ni Ketut Suterji, "Implementation of The Profile Strengthening of Pancasila Student Profile (P5) in Building Student Character in First Middle School," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences* 1, no. 2 (June 1, 2023): 218, <https://doi.org/10.37329/ijms.v1i2.2276>.

¹⁸ Interview: 06/05/2024

¹⁹ Observation: 07/05/2024

²⁰ Fran Gale et al., "Promoting Intercultural Understanding, Connectedness, and Belonging: An

The school also demonstrates a commitment to anti-violence by implementing conflict resolution strategies and promoting peaceful interactions. Conflict incidents are addressed through mediation and dialogue, ensuring issues are resolved constructively. This commitment to anti-violence is critical in maintaining a harmonious environment where students from diverse backgrounds can coexist peacefully. By embedding these principles into its educational framework, SMP Negeri 2 Slahung educates its students and prepares them to be active and responsible participants in a diverse and multicultural society. The school contributes to the broader societal goal of cultivating a more cohesive and harmonious community through these efforts.

Strategies for Promoting Harmony

SMP Negeri 2 Slahung employs a multifaceted approach to fostering harmony within its diverse student body, focusing on tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. A key strategy involves organizing regular intercultural events, such as cultural fairs and workshops. These events are coordinated by the student council or *Organisasi Siswa Intra Sekolah* (OSIS), which ensures they are inclusive and representative of the student population's diversity. Creating opportunities for students to share their traditions and learn about others, these activities help to build a sense of unity and mutual respect.²¹ Observations indicate that these events engage students meaningfully in cross-cultural exchanges.²² Planning and execution to ensure all cultural perspectives are represented.

Collaborative projects involving students from different religious backgrounds are another critical component of the school's strategy. These projects are designed to build teamwork and a shared sense of purpose. Participating in these initiatives teaches students to appreciate diverse viewpoints and develop a deeper understanding of religious and cultural differences. One specific example is the Profile Strengthening of Pancasila Student Profile (P5) project, which is integrated into these collaborative efforts. The P5 project emphasizes values such as tolerance, mutual respect, and national unity—critical principles of Pancasila. Students work together on projects that reflect these values,

Independent Evaluation of Together for Humanity Programs” (Australia: Western Sydney University, 2021), 10, <https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws%3A54691/>.

²¹ Hieronimus Canggung Darong, Yosefina Helenora Jem, and Erna Mena Niman, “Character Building: The Insertion of Local Culture Values in Teaching and Learning,” *JHSS (Journal of Humanities and Social Studies)* 5, no. 3 (October 29, 2021): 252, <https://doi.org/10.33751/jhss.v5i3.4001>.

²² Observation: 07/05/2024

promoting a sense of collective identity and commitment to shared goals. Feedback from students suggests that these projects effectively enhance cross-cultural understanding and build community.²³ Hamdani et al. also stated that religious moderation values can be integrated through the school's vision,²⁴ indicating that a well-defined vision can guide the incorporation of these values into the educational framework, promoting an environment that upholds tolerance and inclusivity.

The school's approach to anti-violence includes a comprehensive conflict resolution program that trains students and staff in effective conflict management techniques. Smidt suggested that mediation and dialogue are emphasized as primary methods for resolving disputes, helping to prevent violence, and encouraging peaceful interactions.²⁵ Continuous monitoring and reinforcement are necessary to sustain effectiveness and address new conflicts.

In addition, an interview with Mr. Ahmad, an Islamic Religion Education (PAI) teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Slahung, highlights the practical implementation of these strategies. Mr. Ahmad explained,

“Our role extends beyond teaching religious content; we are also committed to fostering a culture of respect and understanding among all students. By incorporating religious and cultural sensitivity into our lessons, we aim to model inclusive behavior and encourage students to appreciate each other's backgrounds. Despite our efforts, we recognize that ongoing challenges remain. Some students still experience marginalization, and we need to adapt our approaches to better address these issues continuously.”²⁶

Mr. Ahmad's insights underscore the importance of integrating respect and inclusivity into teaching and school activities. The active involvement of OSIS and the dedication of the teaching staff, including Mr. Ahmad, demonstrate SMP Negeri 2 Slahung's commitment to promoting tolerance, preventing violence, and accommodating diverse cultural practices.

In conclusion, SMP Negeri 2 Slahung's strategies for promoting harmony,

²³ Anastasiia Syzenko and Yana Diachkova, “Building Cross-Cultural Competence in a Foreign Language through Technology-Enhanced Project-Based Learning,” *Amazonia Investiga* 9, no. 27 (March 21, 2020): 411, <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2020.27.03.45>.

²⁴ Hamdani, Idrus, and Subki, “Religious Moderation Management in Educational Institutions (A Comparative Study at SMPN 14 Mataram and SMP Dwi Jendra Mataram),” 449.

²⁵ Hannah M. Smidt, “United Nations Peacekeeping Locally: Enabling Conflict Resolution, Reducing Communal Violence,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64, no. 2–3 (February 1, 2020): 344, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002719859631>.

²⁶ Interview: 13/05/2024

supported by the proactive involvement of OSIS and the teaching staff, illustrate a strong commitment to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment. By focusing on tolerance, anti-violence, and the accommodation of local culture, the school creates a setting where religious diversity is acknowledged and celebrated. The ongoing involvement of OSIS and the insights from teachers like Mr. Ahmad ensure effective implementation. However, continuous evaluation and feedback are necessary to address any gaps and enhance the overall effectiveness of these efforts.

Supporting and Hindering Factors

SMP Negeri 2 Slahung employs a multifaceted approach to implementing religious moderation values, reflecting a deep commitment to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment. Several supporting factors shape the school's strategies and face various hindrances, which are crucial to understanding the effectiveness of its efforts.

Supporting Factors

One of the primary supporting factors is the professionalism of the teaching staff. Teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Slahung, including those specializing in Islamic Education (PAI) and Catholic religion, play a pivotal role in nurturing a respectful and inclusive atmosphere. Their expertise and dedication enable them to engage effectively with students from diverse backgrounds. For instance, PAI and Catholic religion teachers deliver content and serve as motivators and evaluators, guiding students toward a better understanding of religious moderation. This engagement helps bridge gaps between different religious groups and promotes mutual respect.

Another significant factor is the school's commitment to building a solid religious culture. Regular activities such as memorizing short surahs, performing *dhuha* prayers, attending Friday prayers, and establishing a *hafidz* team for Muslim students are complemented by tasks for non-Muslim students, including recording sermons, memorizing daily prayers, and reading the Bible. This approach ensures that all students are actively involved in religious practices, fostering a sense of inclusivity.²⁷ Adequate facilities, including qualified teachers and necessary resources such as books and specialized exam tasks, further enhance the effectiveness of this inclusive educational environment. These resources support the students' academic and spiritual growth,

²⁷ Krisna Sujaya, "Inclusion of Intercultural Competence in Integrated Islamic Curriculum for MTs Students in the Post-Pandemic," *Dinamika Ilmu* 22, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 241, <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v22i1.4997>.

contributing to a well-rounded approach to religious education. This study aligns with the findings of Taupik and Wahid, which indicate that adequate facilities are a supporting factor in implementing religious moderation.²⁸

Hindering Factors

Despite these strengths, several hindering factors impact implementing religious moderation values. A significant challenge is the non-conducive environment caused by religious differences within families. For instance, students with mixed-religion parents, such as a Muslim father and a Catholic mother, may struggle to reconcile diverse religious expectations and practices. This family dynamic can create tension and affect the student's ability to engage with the school's religious activities fully.

Within the school setting, the minority status of non-Muslim students can lead to feelings of exclusion. Observations suggest that while the school strives to create an inclusive environment, non-Muslim students sometimes feel overshadowed by the predominance of Muslim practices.²⁹ This imbalance in representation can undermine the school's efforts to achieve proper religious moderation. Additionally, fluctuations in community religious environments can exacerbate these challenges, as students may face varying levels of acceptance and support outside the school.

The influence of social media presents another significant hindrance. The widespread use of mobile phones among students makes it challenging for teachers to monitor content and usage effectively.³⁰ Social media can distract students from their religious practices and create a disconnect between their online and offline behaviors. This issue highlights the need for enhanced strategies to address the impact of digital distractions on students' religious engagement. Waslah et al. also reveal how social media can affect public perceptions of religious issues.³¹ Social media influences individual behaviors and shapes broader societal views on religious matters, potentially impacting how religious moderation values are perceived and practiced within the community.

²⁸ Taupik C and Abd Wahid, "Strategies of Islamic Education Teachers in Instilling Religious Moderation Values," *Jurnal Ilmiah Tarbiyah Umat* 14, no. 1 (July 5, 2024): 23, <https://doi.org/10.36915/jitu.v14i1.312>.

²⁹ Observation: 08/05/2024

³⁰ Nikolopoulou, "Secondary Education Teachers' Perceptions of Mobile Phone and Tablet Use in Classrooms: Benefits, Constraints and Concerns," *J. Comput. Educ* 7 (2020): 257, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40692-020-00156-7>.

³¹ Waslah, Saihul Atho Alaul Huda, and Fani Ardiansyah, "Digital Literacy-Based Education in Strengthening Religious Moderation for Students at Islamic Middle School Mojopahit, Mojowarno District, Jombang Regency," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Humaniora* 3, no. 3 (August 17, 2024): 2416.

A limited culture of literacy among students further complicates the situation. Many students rely heavily on textbooks and teacher instruction, often neglecting supplementary reading materials. This reliance can hinder their ability to engage deeply with religious texts and broaden their understanding of religious moderation. Encouraging a culture of reading and independent study is essential for addressing this issue.

The effectiveness of SMP Negeri 2 Slahung's approach to religious moderation is closely tied to the interplay between these supporting and hindering factors. The professionalism of teachers and the strong religious culture established within the school provide a solid foundation for promoting inclusivity and respect.³² However, challenges such as family religious dynamics, the minority status of non-Muslim students, the influence of social media, and a limited culture of literacy must be addressed to enhance the overall effectiveness of these efforts.

Insights from student representatives like Max (pseudonym) highlight the need for more equitable representation of all religious practices in school activities and curricula.³³ By incorporating student feedback and continuously evaluating its strategies, SMP Negeri 2 Slahung can refine its approach to address these challenges better. Ongoing adjustments and improvements will be crucial in creating an environment where all students feel valued and included, ultimately fostering a more harmonious and respectful educational setting.

In conclusion, while SMP Negeri 2 Slahung has made significant strides in implementing religious moderation values, recognizing and addressing the hindering factors will be essential for achieving a more inclusive and balanced approach. The school's commitment to incorporating feedback and making necessary adjustments will play a key role in its continued success in promoting religious moderation.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights SMP Negeri 2 Slahung's effective integration of religious moderation into its educational framework, reflecting Indonesia's commitment to unity in diversity. The school's vision, *krida romantika*, promotes creativity, safety, cooperation,

³² Fitri Nur Hayati, Suyatno, and Edhy Susatya, "Strengthening of Religious Character Education Based on School Culture in the Indonesian Secondary School," *European Educational Researcher* 3, no. 3 (2020): 87.

³³ Interview: 13/05/2024

and inclusivity, aligning with the national values of balance and tolerance. Teachers play a crucial role in modeling these principles, creating a respectful environment for students of diverse backgrounds. However, challenges such as mixed-religion family dynamics, the minority status of non-Muslim students, social media distractions, and a limited culture of literacy impact the effectiveness of these efforts. Addressing these issues through continuous evaluation and feedback is essential for further enhancing inclusivity and ensuring all students feel valued and respected.

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