



Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Understanding of Moderation in Schools and Its Implementation in Forming Tolerant Attitudes of Students at Dafa Integrated Islamic Elementary School, Binjai City

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' understanding of madhhab moderation and its implementation in shaping students' tolerant attitudes at Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School in Binjai City.

Methodology: This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method supported by observation, interviews, and documentation. Data validity is ensured through source triangulation and technique triangulation. The research participants consist of the school principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and Islamic Religious Education teachers.

Main Findings: The findings show that teachers possess a strong conceptual understanding of madhhab moderation, particularly in distinguishing between fundamental principles and subsidiary matters in Islamic jurisprudence. This understanding is applied through the use of a multi-madhhab curriculum, interactive and reflective learning strategies such as discussion, role play, and guided reflection, and a school culture that encourages respect for differences. These practices collectively contribute to the development of students' tolerant attitudes, reflected in inclusive communication, appreciation of diverse worship practices, and the formation of harmonious social interactions among peers. Beyond classroom outcomes, these attitudes strengthen social cohesion within the school community and encourage more peaceful interactions among students' families. The educational implications extend to the broader community, where the cultivation of tolerant behavior among students contributes to fostering an inclusive social environment and supports long-term community integration.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating that conceptual clarity among Islamic Religious Education teachers, when combined with consistent pedagogical practice and supportive school culture, plays a significant role in strengthening character education and promoting social integration. The study contributes new insights into how theological understanding and educational praxis can work together to develop a moderate, empathetic, and socially responsible young generation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Moderation refers to a fair, balanced, and proportional perspective, attitude, and religious practice that avoids both extremities of excess and negligence [1]. This concept holds significant relevance in Indonesia's pluralistic social landscape, as it serves as the foundation for strengthening social harmony and preventing polarization [2]. In the field of education, particularly Islamic Religious Education, moderation must be translated into a learning process that addresses not only cognitive development but also the affective and psychomotor dimensions of student [3], [4]. Such an approach aligns with global educational efforts that emphasize the formation of tolerant individuals capable of engaging peacefully in diverse social settings [5].

Introducing moderate religious values from an early age plays a strategic role in preventing the emergence of radical and exclusive attitudes among children and adolescents [6]. Students who are accustomed to practicing tolerance [7] and respecting differing perspectives tend to reject extremist ideologies that threaten social cohesion [8]. International studies affirm that early exposure to pluralistic and peace-based education contributes to students' long-term cognitive, emotional, and moral development [9], [10]. Education that embeds moderation further acts as a safeguard against radicalization by nurturing emotional stability, empathy, and moral awareness [11].

Previous empirical research has demonstrated that children exposed to values of respect and inclusivity develop stronger social adaptability [12], healthier interpersonal relationships, and better emotional well-being [13]. Consequently, learning that promotes moderation contributes not only to knowledge formation but also to the development of character traits such as wisdom, resilience, and integrity [14]. This requires a comprehensive curriculum design that integrates knowledge of diversity [15], with opportunities to translate tolerance into daily actions [16], a principle echoed in global frameworks on character education and social-emotional learning [17].

In a context marked by rising interfaith tensions and misunderstanding driven by the absence of tolerance [18], education grounded in moderation serves as a critical pathway for preparing students to negotiate differences peacefully and constructively. This role is aligned with Indonesia's national educational goals, which emphasize moral development and citizenship formation [19]. Religious moderation education therefore contributes to strengthening students' ethical foundations, enabling them to grow into responsible and humane citizens who uphold shared values, methods, and interactions at school [20].

Islamic Religious Education teachers hold a central role as agents of moderation who internalize and transmit values of balanced understanding within the school environment [21]. Their comprehension of madhhab moderation influences their pedagogical choices [22], interactional patterns with students, and the classroom climate they create [23]. Teachers who embody moderate principles are more capable of fostering mutual respect, empathy, and tolerance among learners [24]. International literature also highlights the role of teachers as peace educators who facilitate dialogue, conflict resolution, and collaborative learning as part of character formation [25]. Through an integrated curriculum, peace education may be implemented through training in conflict management, negotiation, and reflective practice, enabling students to develop the capacity to respond wisely to differences [26]. In this regard, Islamic Religious Education teachers serve not only as conveyors of material but also as facilitators who create spaces for dialogue, acceptance, and religious reflection that foster tolerance.

Existing studies have examined the teaching of religious moderation across various settings, including formal schools [27], Islamic boarding schools [28], and religious organizations. However, studies specifically addressing madhhab moderation, rather than general religious moderation, remain limited. The issue of madhhab differences is particularly sensitive in elementary Islamic education, where doctrinal understanding is still emerging and susceptible to exclusive interpretations if not guided appropriately. Incorporating humanistic educational theories from Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, educators can position students as active participants in constructing inclusive religious understanding [29]. This situates teachers not merely as knowledge transmitters but as facilitators of dialogue, acceptance, and reflective learning that nurture tolerance and openness [30].

Integrated Islamic Primary Schools have a dual mandate to cultivate strong religious commitment while simultaneously fostering openness to diversity. Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School in Binjai City represents a strategic context for examining how madhhab moderation is conceptualized and practiced in Islamic Religious Education. By investigating teachers' understanding of madhhab moderation and its implementation in shaping students' tolerant attitudes, this study contributes conceptually and practically. It addresses a gap in existing research by focusing specifically on sectarian moderation in Islamic education, an area often overlooked in studies that treat moderation as a general concept without considering the specific relevance of madhhab-based learning at the elementary level.

The present research is also positioned within the broader framework of community-based social education, emphasizing how schools function as micro-communities where social values, patterns of interaction, and forms of communal integration are continuously shaped. By observing how teachers articulate and practice madhhab moderation, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how social values such as tolerance, empathy, and peaceful coexistence are formed through school-community interactions. The findings offer insight into the mechanisms through which social cohesion can be strengthened at the grassroots level, making the research

urgent in light of increasing social fragmentation and ideological polarization. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on madhhab-specific moderation within primary education and its integration of community-based social pedagogy, a perspective largely absent in existing moderation studies.

Integrated Islamic Primary Schools carry a dual mandate: shaping students into individuals with strong religious commitment while fostering openness to diversity. Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School in Binjai City represents a strategic site for examining how madhhab moderation is conceptualized and practiced in Islamic Religious Education. By investigating teachers' understanding of madhhab moderation and its implementation in shaping students' tolerant attitudes, this study contributes both conceptually and practically. It fills a research gap by addressing sectarian moderation in Islamic education, an area often overlooked in studies that focus broadly on general religious moderation without considering the specificity and contextual relevance of madhhab-based learning at the elementary level.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative field research design with a descriptive orientation to obtain an in-depth understanding of Islamic Religious Education teachers' comprehension of madhhab moderation and its implementation in shaping students' tolerant attitudes at Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School in Binjai City [31]. The research subjects consist of Islamic Religious Education teachers, homeroom teachers, students, and the school principal, all selected through purposive sampling based on criteria such as a minimum of five years of teaching experience, possession of teacher certification, involvement in curriculum planning, and familiarity with the school's pedagogical culture, while student informants were chosen based on teacher recommendations to represent varying levels of tolerance-related behavior [32].

Data were collected through observation to examine classroom practices, semi-structured interviews with school leaders and Islamic Religious Education teachers to capture conceptual and pedagogical perspectives, and documentation analysis of school records, curriculum materials, lesson plans, and activity reports, all conducted under strict ethical procedures involving informed consent, confidentiality, and adherence to institutional research ethics. To ensure data credibility and dependability, both source triangulation and technique triangulation were applied by comparing information from different informants and cross-verifying data from observation, interviews, and documentation [33]. The data analysis process followed an interactive and systematic model beginning with data condensation to filter and focus information related to madhhab moderation practices [34], followed by coding to categorize emerging concepts and behavioral indicators, thematic analysis to identify patterns and relationships in teachers' understanding, pedagogical strategies, and school culture, and finally conclusion drawing through synthesis of dominant themes. The research procedures encompassed obtaining institutional approvals, preparing research instruments, conducting field engagement through sustained observations and interviews, documenting all data through field notes and recordings, verifying findings through triangulation, and producing analytical interpretations that explain how madhhab moderation is practiced and how it shapes students' tolerant attitudes within the school environment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Quality Teachers' Understanding of Moderate Islam at Dafa Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Binjai City (Conceptual, Pedagogical, and Classroom Climate Dimensions)

The understanding of madhhab moderation among Islamic Religious Education teachers at Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School serves as a conceptual foundation for cultivating an inclusive, balanced, and character-oriented learning environment. This understanding reflects teachers' ability to view Islamic jurisprudential diversity as intellectual richness rather than a source of tension. When teachers internalize the values of *wasathiyyah*, they develop a nuanced appreciation of religious differences and are able to communicate these differences with clarity and fairness to their students. Such understanding aligns with character education theory, which emphasizes the importance of nurturing moral reasoning, empathy, and respect for diversity from an early age [35].

Teachers' comprehension of *ikhtilaf* as a legitimate component of Islamic scholarship further strengthens their ability to present variations in worship as outcomes of valid legal reasoning. This conceptual capacity enables teachers to explain differences such as recitation of the *qunut* during the dawn prayer or variations in ablution as acceptable expressions of jurisprudential diversity. By framing these differences as legitimate, teachers prevent rigid and exclusivist attitudes from developing among students. Such an approach supports learners' cognitive moral development by demonstrating that religious decisions often stem from contextual reasoning rather than absolute uniformity [36].

This conceptual grounding significantly influences teachers' pedagogical strategies [37]. Teachers with a strong understanding of madhhab moderation design lessons that introduce comparative *fiqh* in ways accessible to young learners. Rather than teaching only one normative view, teachers help students explore the diversity of

scholarly opinions that remain within acceptable Islamic jurisprudential parameters. This pedagogical approach encourages critical thinking and appreciation of difference, reflecting character education principles that promote dialogical and reflective learning [38]. Reflective learning activities, including guided writing tasks and structured discussions, help students connect personal experiences with moral lessons, enabling them to internalize tolerance not only cognitively but also emotionally and behaviorally.

The classroom climate created by teachers who model moderation is central to reinforcing tolerant behaviors. Teachers who consistently demonstrate respect, fairness, and openness establish a psychologically safe space where students feel comfortable asking questions and expressing differing viewpoints. Such environments nurture democratic habits and social-emotional competencies essential to character formation. When students observe their teachers interacting respectfully with religious differences, they internalize these behaviors as part of their own social identity. Conversely, limited teacher understanding may result in rigid instructional approaches that categorize differences into right and wrong, thereby reinforcing exclusivist attitudes and narrowing students' perspectives. These risks highlight the importance of strengthening teachers' conceptual competence in madhhab moderation.

By contrast, a limited conceptual understanding among teachers may lead to an oversimplified approach to teaching fiqh, framing differences in binary categories of right and wrong. This kind of instructional approach risks reinforcing exclusive attitudes and narrowing students' perspectives on religious diversity. It can also lead to the development of negative social identities that view difference as a threat rather than an opportunity for learning. These potential risks highlight the importance of strengthening teachers' conceptual competence in madhhab moderation, particularly in contexts where religious interpretations play a central role in daily educational interactions.

The interview data provide clear evidence of the pedagogical and affective dimensions of teachers' work. One teacher, interviewed in August 2025, stated that *"differences in madhhabs are not a problem... both are valid, and we must respect each other."* This statement demonstrates a balanced understanding and a commitment to portraying diversity in positive terms (Interview, August 2025). Such statements reveal how teachers leverage their conceptual knowledge to shape students' perceptions of religious plurality in constructive ways.

Another teacher reported using group discussions to expose students to different schools of thought [39]. According to her account, dividing students into small groups and assigning each group a different madhhab fosters active engagement and mutual listening (Interview, August 2025). Students learn to present information respectfully and listen attentively to their peers. These interactive approaches enhance student collaboration, reduce prejudice, and help students develop the communication skills necessary for navigating a diverse society [40].

A senior teacher highlighted the importance of teachers' exemplary behavior in instilling moderation. She stated that inconsistency between instruction and behavior results in student confusion, whereas consistent modeling strengthens students' understanding and acceptance of differences (Interview, August 2025). This aligns strongly with social learning theory, which asserts that much of human learning occurs through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. When teachers embody moderation in their interactions, students internalize these behaviors as part of their social identity.

The integrated effect of conceptual understanding, pedagogical strategy, and classroom climate can be viewed through the lens of relational dynamics [41]. When teachers possess strong conceptual clarity, they implement strategies that encourage active learning and reflection. These instructional decisions, in turn, cultivate classroom climates that support open dialogue and mutual respect. When these three dimensions align, students develop tolerance as a stable disposition rather than a situational reaction. This dynamic process reinforces the holistic nature of character education, which requires alignment between knowledge, practice, and environment.

The relationship between teacher understanding, teaching practice, and student outcomes can be analytically conceptualized as follows. Teachers who understand *ikhhtilaf* as legitimate differences adopt teaching strategies that promote comparative learning, which leads students to recognize religious diversity as something natural and acceptable. Teachers who see madhhab variation as intellectual wealth create reflective and dialogical activities that help students practice empathy. Teachers who internalize moderation as fairness model respectful interactions, fostering student confidence in engaging with peers who practice different interpretations. Through these interrelated processes, tolerance emerges as a behavioral and relational skill that is continuously reinforced within the learning environment.

This relationship can be more clearly visualized through a simple analytical table embedded in the narrative: teachers' conceptual understanding drives their pedagogical practices, which in turn shape students' tolerant character. When interpreted through social learning theory, the table demonstrates that students form tolerant identities through cognitive engagement, emotional regulation, and observational learning [9]. These identity-forming processes occur within the social microcosm of the school, where teachers function as primary role models.

The findings also show that moderation practices contribute significantly to the formation of students' social identities. Children begin to define themselves not only in terms of their religious practices but also through

their capacity for respect, understanding, and collaboration. Social identity formation is influenced by repeated exposure to inclusive norms and the continuous reinforcement of positive behaviors. When students consistently witness respectful interactions, they adopt similar behaviors and integrate them into their self-concept.

In the broader educational context, the practices identified at Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School illustrate the strategic role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as agents of moderation and character development. These teachers do not merely transmit religious knowledge; they construct moral frameworks that shape how students perceive and engage with diversity. Such roles are crucial in societies facing the challenges of polarization, misinformation, and ideological extremism.

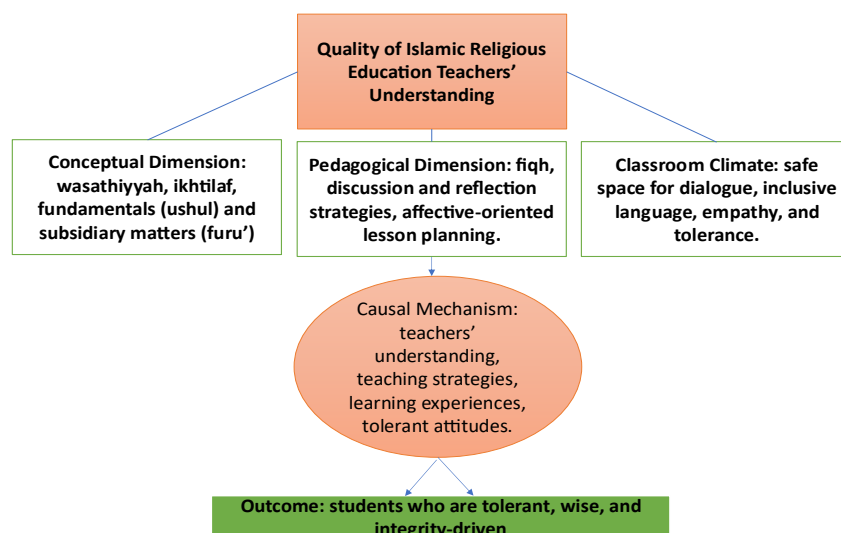


Figure 1. Quality Teachers' Understanding
Image Source: Personal Documentation

At Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School, this alignment also extends beyond the classroom through school-based activities that reinforce shared social values. Regular prayer gatherings, joint recitations, collaborative service activities, and thematic assemblies serve as structured opportunities for students to practice respect, cooperation, and empathy in communal settings. These activities function as social learning spaces where students engage in collective experiences that strengthen their sense of belonging, mutual responsibility, and commitment to peaceful coexistence. Congregational interactions, such as performing prayers together or engaging in school-wide commemorations, become social microcosms in which students learn to coordinate behavior, negotiate differences, and develop shared norms. Through these repeated communal practices, social cohesion is strengthened, and tolerance becomes a lived experience rather than a theoretical concept. These findings affirm that the cultivation of moderation is not limited to classroom instruction but embedded within broader school-community dynamics that function as ongoing social learning processes.

In the broader educational context, the practices at Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School highlight the strategic role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as agents of moderation, character formation, and social integration. These teachers do not merely transmit knowledge; they construct moral frameworks that shape how students perceive and engage with diversity. Their work is particularly crucial in contemporary societies grappling with polarization, misinformation, and ideological extremism. By cultivating inclusive values through conceptual clarity, dialogical pedagogy, exemplary conduct, and community-based learning activities, teachers play a pivotal role in fostering socially cohesive and tolerant future generations.

3.2. Implementation of Moderate Mazhab Learning and Its Impact on the Tolerant Attitudes of Students at Dafa Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Binjai City

The implementation of moderate mazhab principles in Islamic Religious Education at Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School represents a deliberate pedagogical strategy aimed at cultivating tolerance among students from an early age. Rather than positioning religious differences as sources of conflict, the school adopts a curriculum that frames diversity in fiqh as part of the intellectual plurality of Islam. This approach aligns with character education theory, which underscores the importance of value internalization through structured learning experiences that integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of moral development.

At the curricular level, moderation is operationalized through the integration of comparative fiqh within the Islamic Religious Education syllabus. When teaching the procedures of prayer, for example, teachers do not restrict instruction to a single school of thought. Instead, they introduce students to the diversity of opinions among

scholars and emphasize that all recognized mazhabs possess legitimate jurisprudential foundations. This practice ensures that students learn to perceive diversity not as deviation but as a natural expression of Islamic intellectual heritage. Such curricular decisions support the formation of students' cognitive openness, an essential attribute in pluralistic societies.

Lesson planning further demonstrates how the department embeds moderation into daily instruction. Teachers develop lesson plans that incorporate affective learning outcomes alongside cognitive targets. This means that students are assessed not only on their ability to recall religious concepts but also on their attitudes toward differences. Indicators such as the ability to speak respectfully in discussions and to acknowledge the legitimacy of different practices are included in assessment rubrics. These indicators are consistent with global frameworks for character education where respect, empathy, and responsible interaction are considered critical competencies.

In classroom practice, teachers employ learning strategies that facilitate active student engagement. Group discussions, presentations, and guided exploration are regularly used to introduce students to mazhab differences. For instance, students may be divided into groups to explore specific jurisprudential opinions and then present their findings to the class. Through this method, they learn not only to articulate their perspectives but also to listen attentively and respectfully to differing viewpoints. This participatory practice reinforces tolerance and social interaction skills.

Role-playing constitutes another pedagogical approach to instilling empathy. Students are assigned roles as scholars from different mazhabs and tasked with explaining the rationale behind their respective opinions. This activity, which requires students to adopt perspectives different from their own, helps them develop perspective-taking skills, a central component of tolerance according to social learning theory and moral development literature. Through repetition, students begin to understand that differences in interpretation do not imply conflict but reflect legitimate scholarly discourse.

The classroom climate cultivated through this approach is one characterized by safety, respect, and mutual trust. Teachers emphasize that variations in matters of *furu'* are valid and should not be grounds for ridicule or exclusion. This affirmation provides students with the confidence to ask questions and engage in dialogue without fear of judgment. A classroom environment that welcomes inquiry becomes a platform for intellectual curiosity and ethical growth. Such an environment aligns with educational psychology findings that supportive classroom climates enhance pro-social behavior and reduce prejudice among children.

At the level of school culture, the implementation of moderation extends beyond instructional practices. Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School establishes policies that reflect flexibility in worship practices, such as allowing students the choice to recite qunut during congregational prayers. This policy communicates institutional recognition of mazhab diversity and reinforces the idea that religious variation is acceptable. By embodying these values in school policy, the institution becomes a living model of pluralism and harmony.

The principal articulated this commitment, stating, *"We are committed to making moderation part of our school culture... children are accustomed to respecting even small differences"* (Interview, September 2025). This demonstrates administrative alignment with pedagogical moderation and illustrates the role of school leadership in reinforcing ethical values. Leadership commitment is essential because students' perceptions of diversity are shaped not only by classroom instruction but also by the overarching norms governing their school environment.

Curricular leadership is also evident in the statement of the Deputy Head of Curriculum: *"We deliberately included moderation as a theme in the PAI syllabus... even in assessments, we emphasize attitude, not just knowledge"* (Interview, September 2025). This highlights that moderation is not an incidental addition but an intentionally embedded pedagogical principle. Integrating moderation into curriculum documents ensures continuity and sustainability in practice, regardless of changes in teaching staff.

Teachers' testimonies further show how moderation impacts students' mindsets. One teacher explained that before moderation was emphasized, students frequently argued about whose religious practice was correct. After consistent exposure to comparative fiqh and positive modeling, students began using inclusive expressions such as *"that is also acceptable"* and *"that method is also correct according to another school of thought"* (Interview, September 2025). These linguistic shifts reflect deeper cognitive and emotional changes linked to tolerance and respect.

The positive impact of implementing mazhab moderation is evident in students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. Cognitively, students acquire broader knowledge of Islamic diversity. Affectively, they become calmer and more understanding when encountering differences in worship. Psychomotorically, they adopt inclusive language in peer interactions. This triadic development corresponds to character education theory, which posits that moral formation must occur through knowledge, feelings, and actions [5].

Teacher observation data confirms a noticeable decline in incidents of ridicule and negative labeling related to worship differences. Students increasingly use neutral expressions such as "different ways" rather than judgmental terms. This shift suggests a transformation in students' social identities. They begin to define themselves not by exclusive belonging to a particular mazhab, but by their ability to coexist peacefully with others. In this way, moderation contributes directly to social cohesion within the classroom.

The implementation of moderation also supports the development of healthy social relationships. Students no longer restrict friendships to those who share the same religious practices. Instead, they learn to accept and appreciate diversity, resulting in a more harmonious classroom environment. Social development research suggests that such relationships reduce anxiety, increase empathy, and foster emotional resilience [6]. Thus, moderation education strengthens both social and emotional well-being.

Challenges do emerge, particularly limited instructional time and occasional resistance from parents who hold exclusive religious views. However, the school addresses this through regular parent meetings and communication efforts explaining the importance of moderation in Islamic education. By educating parents, the school bridges home-school values and minimizes conflict between institutional and familial expectations. This partnership approach is critical for ensuring the long-term sustainability of moderation practices.

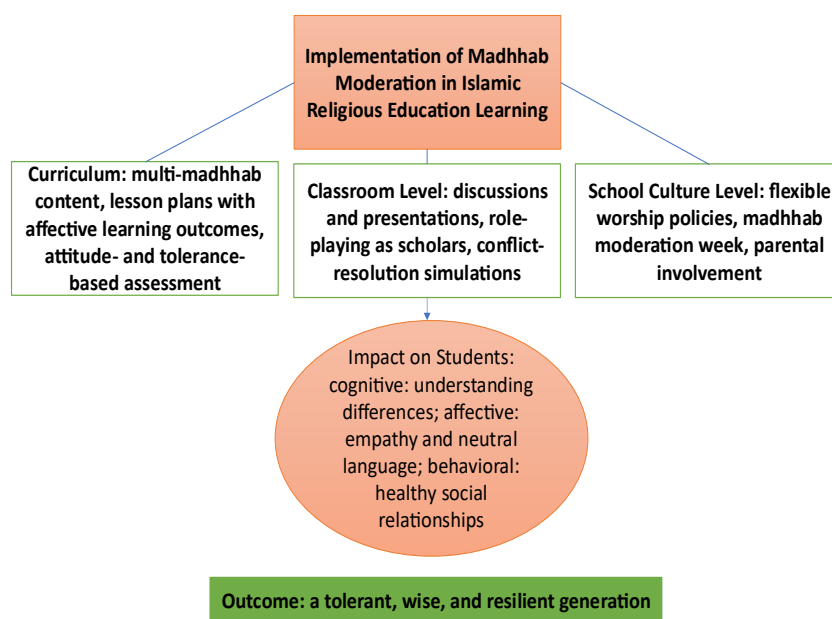


Figure 2. Implementation of moderate religious practices

Image Source: Personal Documentation

In summary, the implementation of moderate mazhab principles at Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School operates through a comprehensive system that includes curriculum integration, pedagogical design, classroom climate, and school culture. These elements interact to foster tolerant attitudes and socially responsible behavior among students. Interviews with school leaders and teachers illustrate that this approach is effective, scalable, and potentially replicable in other educational institutions seeking to prevent exclusivism and strengthen pluralistic values from early childhood.

At Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School, the alignment between teachers' conceptual understanding, pedagogical strategies, and classroom climate extends beyond instructional activities and is reinforced through communal school practices that cultivate shared social values. Regular prayer gatherings, joint Qur'an recitations, collective service activities, and thematic school assemblies function as structured communal experiences through which students practice cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect. These activities are not merely ritualistic but operate as informal social systems where students learn the meaning of belonging, responsibility, and harmonious coexistence. Through repeated participation in these events, students internalize values that shape their social behavior both inside and outside the classroom. Congregational interactions such as communal prayers, shared celebrations, and group-based learning activities become social learning processes that strengthen social cohesion, establish shared norms, and reinforce tolerance as a lived communal practice rather than an abstract moral ideal. The findings therefore demonstrate that the school functions as a micro-community where social values are continuously negotiated, transmitted, and reinforced through daily collective experience.

These findings have important theoretical implications for understanding how community values and social integration are shaped through educational practices. The study demonstrates that value internalization occurs through a combination of conceptual instruction, role modeling, participatory learning, and communal religious activities, confirming the central tenets of social learning theory and character education frameworks. The integration of communal practices into the learning process suggests that the formation of tolerant identities is socio-relational, cumulative, and sustained through collective participation rather than individual cognition alone. Theoretically, this study expands the discourse on religious moderation by showing that madhhab

moderation operates not only at the level of cognitive understanding but also within the social ecology of the school community. It provides empirical evidence that community-based educational settings are effective in shaping group norms, fostering interdependence, and promoting inclusive social identities among children.

Practically, the study offers several contributions for the development of community-based social education models. First, it suggests that community-oriented schooling should incorporate structured communal activities that reinforce shared values and promote positive interaction across diverse backgrounds. Second, the findings underline the importance of equipping teachers with conceptual clarity and dialogical pedagogical skills to facilitate value-based learning that extends beyond subject content. Third, the research highlights the need for consistent role modeling by teachers and school leaders as a central component of social value transmission. Fourth, the evidence supports the development of integrative models where classrooms, school culture, and communal religious practices operate synergistically to produce tolerant, cooperative, and socially responsible individuals. These practical insights can inform curriculum designers, policymakers, and educational practitioners who aim to strengthen social cohesion and community integration through school-based initiatives. By demonstrating how moderation values are transmitted through both formal instruction and communal participation, this study provides a foundation for designing holistic, community-embedded educational models that are responsive to the social challenges faced by pluralistic societies.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the understanding and implementation of madhhab moderation among Islamic Religious Education teachers at Dafa Integrated Islamic Primary School in Binjai City play a central role in shaping students' tolerant attitudes. The integration of comparative fiqh into the curriculum, supported by dialogical, reflective, and student-centered pedagogical practices, enables students to appreciate jurisprudential diversity as a natural and legitimate part of Islamic scholarship. Through these practices, tolerance is not transmitted merely as cognitive knowledge, but is formed through repeated exposure to balanced explanations, respectful dialogue, and constructive engagement with differences.

The findings also indicate that teachers' conceptual clarity regarding *ikhtilaf* directly influences classroom dynamics and students' emotional responses to variation in religious practice. When teachers model fairness, respect, and openness, students internalize these attitudes as part of their developing moral identity. The reduction in negative labeling, the adoption of inclusive language, and the increase in cooperative interactions among students demonstrate that moderation contributes to the growth of empathy, mutual understanding, and social cohesion. These positive behavioral outcomes highlight the value of early character education based on moderation principles and align with developmental theories emphasizing the role of modeling and social interaction in moral formation.

The implementation of moderate madhhab principles is further strengthened by schoolwide policies that support flexibility and inclusivity. Practices such as allowing students to choose whether or not to perform qunut during congregational prayer exemplify how institutional norms reinforce the values introduced in the classroom. These policies create a coherent environment in which students experience consistency between instruction, school culture, and peer interaction. This alignment enhances the effectiveness of moderation education and prepares students to engage constructively with religious diversity in broader social contexts, thereby contributing to the prevention of exclusivism and early radicalization.

However, the study also identifies challenges, particularly limited classroom time for Islamic Religious Education and occasional parental resistance to pluralistic approaches. These limitations indicate the need for stronger collaboration between educators and families so that moderation values instilled at school are reinforced at home. Addressing these challenges requires continuous communication, parental education, and supportive policies that emphasize the importance of moderation as part of holistic Islamic character formation. Strengthening these partnerships will ensure that students' understanding of diversity is nurtured through both school and family environments.

Based on these findings, future research should explore the long-term impact of madhhab moderation on students as they progress into adolescence, using longitudinal methods to understand how tolerance develops over time. Comparative studies between schools that apply moderation systematically and those that do not would provide broader insights into the effectiveness of different models. Further investigation into the role of parents and family environments is also needed to understand the factors that support or hinder the internalization of moderation values. In addition, quantitative approaches using validated scales of tolerance, empathy, and social cohesion could complement qualitative findings, while research on teacher training and professional development would help policymakers design evidence-based programs to strengthen moderation education in Islamic schools at regional and national levels.

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