



IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE AT SMKN 4 MATARAM

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' understanding of religious moderation in the digital age, describe the application of its values in the classroom, and identify the challenges faced at SMKN 4 Mataram. The approach used was descriptive qualitative research involving non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation of four PAI teachers and ten 11th-grade students. Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, encompassing data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, and was validated through triangulation of sources, methods, and data. The research findings show that PAI teachers interpret religious moderation as an attitude of making room for differences, respecting diversity, not being easily provoked, carefully filtering information, being fair, and upholding good moral character both in the real and virtual worlds. This is implemented through the

planning of teaching modules, inclusive practices such as prayers according to one's beliefs, collaborative discussions, case studies, presentations, and the use of digital media, as well as evaluation through pre-tests, formative assessments, and post-tests, although these practices are not yet fully optimized. Challenges include the demanding nature of vocational training, the influence of electronic devices and social media, interfaith interactions, competition with online learning resources, and students' stubborn attitudes. The contribution of this study is to provide an empirical overview of Islamic Education teachers' understanding of religious moderation, the implementation of these values, and the challenges of applying them in Islamic Education instruction in the digital age. The findings of this study can serve as a basis for evaluation by teachers and schools in developing Islamic Education instruction that is tolerant, inclusive, and adaptable to digital advancements.

Keywords: *Religious Moderation, Islamic Education, the Digital Age*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pemahaman guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) mengenai moderasi beragama di era digital, menggambarkan penerapan nilai-nilainya dalam pembelajaran, serta mengidentifikasi kendala yang dihadapi di SMKN 4 Mataram. Pendekatan yang dipakai adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan observasi non-partisipan, wawancara semi terstruktur, dan dokumentasi terhadap empat guru PAI dan sepuluh siswa kelas XI. Analisis data memakai model interaktif Miles dan Huberman, mencakup kondensasi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan, dan divalidasi melalui triangulasi sumber, metode, dan data. Temuan penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa guru PAI memaknai moderasi beragama sebagai sikap memberi ruang bagi perbedaan, menghargai keragaman, tidak mudah terprovokasi, cermat menyaring informasi, adil, dan menjunjung akhlakul karimah baik di ruang nyata maupun maya. Penerapannya dilakukan melalui perencanaan modul ajar, pelaksanaan inklusif berupa doa sesuai keyakinan, diskusi kolaboratif, studi kasus, presentasi, dan pemanfaatan media digital, serta evaluasi melalui asesmen awal, proses, dan akhir, meskipun belum sepenuhnya optimal. Kendala yang muncul meliputi padatnya praktik kejuruan, pengaruh gawai dan media sosial, pergaulan lintas agama, persaingan dengan sumber belajar internet, dan sikap siswa yang keras kepala. Kontribusi penelitian ini adalah memberikan gambaran empiris mengenai pemahaman guru PAI, implementasi nilai-nilai moderasi beragama, serta tantangan penerapannya dalam pembelajaran PAI di

era digital. Hasil penelitian dapat menjadi bahan evaluasi bagi guru dan sekolah dalam mengembangkan pembelajaran PAI yang toleran, inklusif, dan adaptif terhadap perkembangan digital.

Kata kunci: Moderasi Beragama, Pembelajaran PAI, Era Digital

A. Introductions

Religious moderation in the context of education still faces challenges, particularly regarding students' understanding and application of the concept. Religious moderation has not yet been fully understood as a perspective and attitude toward practicing religious teachings in a fair, balanced, tolerant, and moderate manner. In fact, (Kementrian Agama RI, 2019) emphasizes that religious moderation is a perspective, attitude, and behavior in practicing religious teachings by taking a middle ground, acting fairly, and avoiding extremism. In practice, students may encounter a variety of religious information in digital spaces that is not always accompanied by adequate context and understanding, which has the potential to influence how they perceive differences and practice religious teachings. This situation indicates that strengthening religious moderation cannot be achieved merely through the theoretical presentation of concepts but requires a learning process that connects religious knowledge with the development of students' attitudes and behaviors. Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of this issue. (M. Nuzulul Ulum & Muqowim, 2026) position religious moderation as the paradigm for Islamic Education (PAI) in fostering students' humanistic character. (Herlina et al., 2022) examined the resilience of religious moderation at Islamic religious universities in the face of the era of disruption. (Akhyar Al Haris All et al., 2025) highlighted the importance of strengthening education in religious moderation for the younger generation so that they may adopt tolerant and inclusive attitudes amid digital disruption. Meanwhile, (Suryadi, 2022) examined the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic education. These findings indicate that religious moderation has become a focus in Islamic education; however, research on how the values of religious moderation are understood and concretely implemented through Islamic Education (PAI) instruction at the secondary school level particularly in addressing the challenges of the digital environment still needs to be strengthened.

Thus, teachers' understanding of religious moderation is a crucial aspect to examine, as this understanding can influence how teachers design instructional materials, select teaching methods, facilitate learning interactions, and address

diverse religious perspectives that arise within the school environment. However, these findings have not yet specifically provided an in-depth picture of the relationship between PAI teachers' understanding, the implementation of moderation values in instruction, and the challenges faced by teachers in the context of public vocational high schools (SMK) in the digital age. Vocational education has unique characteristics because the educational process is directed not only toward the development of general and religious knowledge but also toward the mastery of vocational competencies that require practical learning. These conditions provide a distinct context for the implementation of PAI instruction and the reinforcement of the value of religious moderation. Therefore, research at the specific school level is necessary to examine how the concept of religious moderation is translated into actual teaching practices. This study is set in the context of SMKN 4 Mataram, focusing on PAI teachers' understanding, the implementation of the values of religious moderation in PAI instruction, and the challenges arising from the evolving digital environment. With this focus, this study does not place its novelty solely on the issue of religious moderation or the vocational high school (SMK) level, but rather on a more contextual empirical exploration of how PAI teachers understand and implement religious moderation in specific learning situations. This approach is important to complement previous research that has provided conceptual and empirical insights into religious moderation but has differed in terms of location, educational level, and research focus.

Based on this gap, the novelty of this study lies in its micro-practical examination of religious moderation in Islamic Education (PAI) instruction at SMKN 4 Mataram by linking three main aspects: PAI teachers' understanding of religious moderation, the implementation of religious moderation values in the learning process, and the challenges faced by teachers in the digital age. This focus allows the study to view religious moderation not merely as a concept or learning material, but as a value sought to be realized through the learning process and educational interactions. This study also emphasizes the role of teachers as key actors who translate the concept of religious moderation into teaching practices. In the context of the digital age, teachers not only face challenges in delivering Islamic Education (PAI) content but must also respond to the various religious information that students obtain from digital media. Therefore, a simultaneous examination of understanding, implementation, and challenges can provide a more comprehensive picture of the practice of religious moderation in PAI instruction. Based on this discussion, the research questions in this study are formulated as follows: How do PAI teachers at SMKN 4 Mataram understand religious moderation in the digital

age? How are the values of religious moderation implemented in PAI instruction in the digital age at SMKN 4 Mataram? And what challenges do PAI teachers face in implementing religious moderation in the digital age at SMKN 4 Mataram? In line with these research questions, this study aims to determine Islamic Education teachers' understanding of religious moderation in the digital age at SMKN 4 Mataram, to describe the implementation of the values of religious moderation in Islamic Education instruction in the digital age at SMKN 4 Mataram, and to identify the challenges faced by Islamic Education teachers in implementing religious moderation in the digital age at SMKN 4 Mataram. This study is expected to enrich empirical research on religious moderation in Islamic education while providing an overview of Islamic Education (PAI) teaching practices in fostering a balanced, tolerant, inclusive, and responsive understanding of religion in the context of the evolving digital environment.

B. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a complex, dynamic, and contextual phenomenon that requires in-depth understanding based on the natural conditions in the field (Sugiyono, 2019). The researcher served as the primary instrument, being physically present at the research site to collect, interpret, and analyze the data. The study was conducted at SMKN 4 Mataram, located at Jalan Pendidikan No. 45, Dasan Agung Baru, Selaparang District, Mataram City, West Nusa Tenggara, with primary data collection taking place in July–August 2026. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement and relevance to the research focus. There were 14 informants, consisting of four PAI teachers who taught grades 10 and 11 and were involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of instruction, and ten grade 11 students from Class XI Fashion 2 and Class XI Tourism Services (ULP) who had taken or were currently taking PAI courses. Data were collected through non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to examine the PAI learning process, teacher-student interactions, and practices reflecting the value of religious moderation. Interviews were conducted to explore teachers' and students' understanding, the forms of religious moderation implementation, and the challenges of applying it in the digital age. Documentation was used to supplement the data through a review of teaching modules, PAI textbooks, posters or school informational materials, and photographs of relevant

activities. The research instruments consisted of observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and a documentation checklist.

The research procedures included a preliminary study and determination of the research focus, development of instruments, obtaining research permits, selection of informants, data collection, data analysis, verification of data validity, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was verified through source triangulation and methodological triangulation (Abdussamad, 2021). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from Islamic Education (PAI) teachers and students, while methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis utilized an interactive model that included data condensation, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions (Sugiyono, 2014). Data condensation was carried out by selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data from field notes, interview transcripts, and documents. The data are then presented descriptively based on three research focuses: PAI teachers' understanding of religious moderation, the implementation of religious moderation values in the classroom, and the challenges of applying them in the digital age. Conclusions were drawn inductively based on patterns and meanings identified in the data, then verified through re-reading the data, cross-referencing sources, and triangulation until consistent and scientifically valid findings were obtained.

C. Discussion

1. Islamic Education Teachers' Understanding of Religious Moderation in the Digital Age

The results of interviews with four Islamic education teachers show that their understandings of religious moderation in the digital age are interrelated and complementary. Islamic education teacher 1 stated that:

"In my opinion, religious moderation means giving each other space, respecting one another, and not interfering with one another. In the digital age, that means not spreading provocative content, not blaspheming other religions, and not readily believing information from unclear sources."

PAI Teacher 1 interprets religious moderation as an attitude of giving each other space, respecting one another, and not interfering with one another. In the context of the digital age, he emphasizes not spreading provocative content, not denigrating other religions, and not readily believing information from unclear

sources. In his view, all religions must coexist in both the real world and the digital world, making religious moderation an integral part of “akhlakul karimah” in the digital age.

This statement was reinforced by the PAI 2 teacher, who stated the following:

“For me, moderation in the digital age is a peaceful way of practicing religion not extreme, not easily provoked, and maintaining respect despite differences.”

The PAI 2 teacher defines religious moderation as a peaceful way of practicing religion one that is not extreme, not easily provoked, and maintains respect despite differences. He highlighted that religious information is currently widespread on social media, YouTube, and WhatsApp, making moderation essential so that students can effectively filter information, avoid mindlessly sharing content, and maintain harmony. In schools with religious diversity, moderation serves as the foundation for students to learn together without discriminating based on beliefs.

In contrast, PAI 3 Teacher stated the following:

“Religious moderation in the digital age is a fair perspective, attitude, and practice of religion what does that mean? Religious moderation adheres to the appropriate religious rules; for example, since we are Muslims, our guidelines are the Quran and the Hadith.”

Based on the interview above, PAI Teacher 3 interprets religious moderation as a fair perspective, attitude, and practice of religion based on the Quran and Hadith. He emphasized the importance of understanding the wisdom behind differences, as embodied in the concept of *li ta'arufu*—getting to know one another. Religious moderation is also understood as an effort to prevent bullying, taunting, and various behaviors that undermine harmony.

In contrast, PAI Teacher 4 stated the following:

“My understanding of religious moderation in this digital age is the attitude of respecting friends, especially since bullying is so prevalent now, both in the real world and on social media. I’ve noticed that some students are unable to protect themselves from cyberbullying,”

Religious Education Teacher 4 interprets religious moderation as an attitude of respecting peers, rejecting bullying, and maintaining proper etiquette on social media. He instills the idea that all students have the same rights and responsibilities and must not be discriminated against based on ethnicity or religion.

The observation results also show that this understanding is reflected in daily behavior. The teacher fosters polite communication, treats all students equally, provides equal opportunities for discussion, addresses bullying behavior, and reminds students to verify information before sharing it. During Imtaq activities, the teacher encourages prayer and religious practices that respect differences in belief. Thus, religious moderation is not only understood conceptually but is also manifested in concrete manners and moral conduct, both in physical and digital spaces.

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMKN 4 Mataram understand religious moderation as an attitude characterized by balance, fairness, tolerance, respect for differences, rejection of extremism, rejection of bullying, and wise use of social media. This understanding aligns with the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' concept of religious moderation, which emphasizes four indicators: commitment to the nation, tolerance, opposition to violence, and accommodation of local cultures (Kementrian Agama RI, 2019). Teachers not only understand moderation as interfaith relations in the real world but also as digital ethics—such as refraining from spreading misinformation, avoiding hate speech, not engaging in cyberbullying on social media, and not being easily provoked by extremist religious content. This understanding demonstrates that religious moderation has been internalized as part of “akhlakul karimah” in the digital age.

Understanding the theoretical foundations of religious moderation is crucial for grasping its application in Islamic education, providing insights into the nuanced interpretation and implementation of religious values within the educational environment (Mala & Hunaida, 2023). The implementation of religious moderation in Islamic education in Indonesia can be achieved through curriculum development, the learning process, and the creation of a school environment that supports the practice of religious moderation (Arifin & Huda, 2024). These efforts are expected to produce a younger generation with a moderate and tolerant understanding of religion, capable of contributing to maintaining harmony in community, national, and state life.

Teachers' knowledge of religious moderation is crucial because they are the ones who have direct contact with students, educating and guiding them based on religious and national values (Purbajati, 2020). Teachers' understanding of religious moderation is necessary so that these values can be appropriately integrated into the learning process and students' lives within the school environment.

Furthermore, local wisdom is closely linked to one of the pillars of religious moderation, namely accommodation of local culture (Kementrian Agama RI, 2019). Integrating local wisdom into learning can serve as a means to introduce values of religious diversity that align with the context of students' lives. By emphasizing the importance of promoting local wisdom, the use of technology in learning can also be enhanced. Technology can serve as a medium to help package and present traditional elements of local wisdom in ways that are more engaging, creative, and relevant to the times. Through the integration of local wisdom and technology, religious moderation education is expected not only to provide conceptual understanding but also to help students internalize and apply the values of tolerance, appreciation for differences, and respect for culture in their daily lives (Aflahah et al., 2023).

Religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education can be achieved through several strategies, namely strengthening the paradigm of moderation, the curriculum, and the learning process. These three strategies are interrelated in the development of policies for implementing the strengthening of moderation within the context of Islamic Religious Education (Suryadi, 2022). Furthermore, moderation does not stand as a separate, additional subject. Moderation can be integrated into all elements of learning. In the Qur'an and Hadith component, teachers can discuss verses on justice, brotherhood, the prohibition against slander, and the importance of tabayyun. In the creed component, teachers can firmly affirm their beliefs without disparaging followers of other religions. In the ethics component, teachers can foster polite, honest, fair, and compassionate attitudes. In the fiqh component, teachers can introduce the proper etiquette for handling differences of opinion. In the history of Islamic civilization component, teachers can highlight examples of peaceful da'wah, dialogue, scientific knowledge, and respect for cultural diversity (Sudarmin Sudarmin & Amaluddin Amaluddin, 2025).

2. Implementation of Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

The implementation of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMKN 4 Mataram consists of planning, implementation, and evaluation. During the planning stage, teachers develop teaching modules for the Islamic Religious Education and Character Education course for 11th-grade students in Phase F. The planned time allocation is 2 sessions, totaling 9 JP × 45 minutes. The main content relates to strengthening harmony through tolerance and the preservation of human life. The module includes the module title, time allocation,

assessment of student readiness, characteristics of the material, graduate profile dimensions, learning outcomes, interdisciplinary connections, and learning objectives.

The assessment of student readiness indicates that students possess foundational knowledge of tolerance and harmony from previous grade levels. Student interests vary, but the majority are interested in social and humanitarian issues. Students' socioeconomic backgrounds are diverse, resulting in varied experiences with differences. The content is categorized into conceptual, procedural, and affective knowledge. The conceptual aspect covers textual principles regarding tolerance, harmony, and respect for human life. The procedural aspect covers the steps for applying a tolerant attitude and responding to differences. The affective aspect focuses on instilling an attitude of love for harmony and respect for life.

During the implementation phase, there was a wide variety of teaching methods. PAI 1 and PAI 3 teachers tended to employ student-centered learning. The PAI 1 teacher began the lesson with a greeting, a prayer according to each student's faith, and a roll call. The prayer was not led by a specific recitation; instead, students were given the freedom to pray according to their own methods and beliefs. Afterward, the teacher conducts a light icebreaker and poses a thought-provoking question about the difference between merely knowing about God and truly practicing monotheism. During the main activity, PAI Teacher 1 displays a large image showing several people worshiping in different places, then divides the students into small groups. The teacher moves from group to group, refrains from dominating the discussion, and only poses thought-provoking questions. The students actively spoke, pointed to the images, and wrote down the results of their discussions.



Picture 1. Group Discussion

The PAI 3 teacher also employs participatory learning. He divides the students into small groups of 5–6 students, with each group receiving different material. The students discuss the material, the teacher circulates among the groups to guide them without dominating the discussion, and each group presents the results of their discussion. An icebreaker is used to keep spirits high, after which the teacher reinforces and clarifies students' understanding of religious tolerance and moderation. The PAI 3 teacher also invites students to pray silently according to their respective beliefs. This practice is a concrete form of tolerance without mixing religious beliefs.

In contrast to the other two, the PAI 2 teacher still relies predominantly on lectures and question-and-answer sessions. Students are indeed asked to search for additional information about moderation online, but the dominant method remains the lecture. Students are more often listeners than active participants. Some students asked critical questions, and the teacher provided fairly in-depth answers; however, there were no simulations, case studies, or group discussions. Guidance on digital literacy was also absent, resulting in unfocused information searches.

Meanwhile, PAI Teacher 4 continued to employ a highly teacher-centered approach, emphasizing verbal-cognitive aspects. During the lesson, the PAI 4 teacher used only the lecture method, remaining seated throughout the session, while students simply listened to the teacher's explanations without engaging in any other visible activities.

In the closing activity, the PAI 4 teacher asked students to write a brief reflection on what they had learned and what they still did not understand. The teacher also encouraged students to continue nurturing their faith and to respect one another. The lesson concluded with a prayer according to each student's faith, led or guided in a simple manner without forcing any specific recitation, and ended with a greeting. PAI Teacher 3 summarized the material with the students, provided an opportunity for questions or comments, and then concluded with a prayer according to each student's faith. There was a reflection on the learning experience and active student participation. In contrast, PAI Teacher 2 concluded with a group prayer without any structured reflection or final evaluation, while PAI Teacher 4 summarized the lesson material on their own without involving the students.

During the evaluation phase, PAI Teacher 1 conducted an initial assessment through light icebreakers and oral prompt questions. Formative assessment was conducted during group discussions by observing participation, argumentation skills, and collaboration. Summative assessment was conducted through written

reflections and group presentations. PAI Teacher 2 conducted an initial assessment through probing questions that linked the material to everyday life. Formative assessment was conducted during group discussions by evaluating active participation, cooperation, respect for differing opinions, and presentations. Final assessment is conducted through an infographic project or a short video promoting tolerance and harmony. The assessment covers knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Meanwhile, the PAI 4 teacher has not yet optimally implemented initial, process, and final assessments in accordance with the requirements for authentic assessment in the teaching module.



Picture 2. The PAI Learning Process

Strengthening religious moderation in Islamic Education (PAI) instruction in the digital age must be carried out in a planned manner. Moderation cannot simply be conveyed as general advice. It must be integrated into learning objectives, content, methods, media, and assessment. The four indicators of moderation—commitment to the nation, tolerance, opposition to violence, and acceptance of traditions—can be translated into concrete learning activities. Islamic Education (PAI) possesses a strong foundation because it incorporates elements of the Qur'an, Hadith, creed, ethics, jurisprudence, and the history of Islamic civilization. All of these elements can be directed toward shaping students who are faithful, ethical, critical thinkers, and responsible members of a diverse society. The digital age presents both opportunities and challenges (Ilmi & Mukti Nasrowi, 2026). Technology can enrich learning, but it can also spread narrow and provocative religious narratives. Therefore, PAI teachers need to serve as role models, facilitators of dialogue, curators of digital resources, and designers of attitude assessments. Strategies that can be implemented include curating digital resources, evidence-based reflective dialogue, peaceful content projects, experiential learning, the ethical use of AI, and practice in polite commentary. These strategies bring PAI learning closer to students' daily lives (Ngadiman & Ibrahim, 2026).

Furthermore, integrating the values of religious moderation into PAI instruction is becoming increasingly important in navigating the diverse social landscape of the digital age. These values of religious moderation must be internalized through various components of instruction, ranging from strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques to the instructional models employed (Wahidah & Kasidi, 2024). Religious Education (PAI) is not only oriented toward a textual understanding of religious teachings but also encourages students to develop a tolerant attitude, respect differences, act fairly, and avoid various forms of extremism. Thus, students are expected to be able to comprehensively understand religious teachings while implementing the values of religious moderation in their daily lives amidst social, cultural, and religious diversity (Risqoh et al., 2026).

3. Challenges Faced by Islamic Education Teachers in Implementing Religious Moderation in the Digital Age

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the challenges faced by Islamic education teachers in implementing religious moderation in the digital age include five main issues. First, excessive smartphone use. Students are more interested in and spend their free time on their phones scrolling through social media, playing online games, or watching entertainment content thereby neglecting their religious obligations and studies. PAI Teacher 1 stated that students pay more attention to notifications than to the call to prayer or the teacher's instructions. Recess time, which should be used for prayer, is instead spent scrolling through social media or playing games, causing prayer times to be missed. PAI Teacher 1 explained:

“Once they have their phones in hand, the students pay more attention to notifications than to the call to prayer. Recess time, which should be used for prayer, is spent scrolling through social media or playing games. As a result, prayer times are missed. We've reminded them, but they just go back to their phones.”

Second, the influence of social interactions on social media. Students can interact with anyone, anytime, and anywhere, without geographical or time constraints. An interview with a student identified as F revealed the following:

“I have a friend of a different religion in a WhatsApp group. Sometimes they send holiday greetings or invite me to their religious events. I just go along

with it because I feel bad saying no, but sometimes I'm also confused about where the boundaries lie."

The digital age has blurred these boundaries. Friends of different faiths can chat late into the night, share content with one another, and influence each other. Sometimes students participate in their friends' religious activities simply because they're invited in a group chat without giving it much thought. This can blur the boundaries of religious belief.

Third, students are learning more from the internet. As expressed by a student with the initial N, she stated:

"I often watch sermons on YouTube, Ma'am. Sometimes the content differs from what's explained in class. I get confused about which is correct. But I still ask the teacher if there's something I don't understand."

Students now have broad access to various religious learning resources online, such as sermons by religious scholars on YouTube, articles on websites, and content on TikTok. A PAI 3 teacher noted that students now learn more about religion from the internet than from their teachers. They watch sermons, read articles, and view content that sometimes differs from what is taught in class. Teachers must explain these differences of opinion without belittling others' viewpoints. This reflects a shift in religious authority from teachers to the internet.

Fourth, students' defiant attitudes. In an interview with PAI Teacher 4, he shared the following:

"A small number of students who are just entering puberty are defiant. In the digital age, they're also defiant in the virtual world. In WhatsApp groups they protest; on social media they complain; and sometimes they taunt one another in the comment sections. This defiant attitude, which previously only appeared in the real world, can now spread rapidly online."

A small percentage of students are stubborn, argumentative, and difficult to guide. This attitude manifests not only in the classroom but also online. A PAI 4 teacher stated that a small number of students who have recently entered puberty are stubborn, and in the digital age, they also act stubbornly in the virtual world. In WhatsApp groups, they protest; on social media, they complain; and sometimes they taunt one another in the comment sections. This stubborn attitude, which previously only appeared in the real world, can now spread rapidly in the virtual world

These research findings align with those of (Ramadhan & Burhanudin, 2026), who noted that factors supporting the implementation of religious moderation in PAI instruction include: (1) the competence and exemplary behavior of PAI teachers; (2) a religious and moderate school culture; (3) policy support and school leadership; (4) digital literacy programs; and (5) collaboration with parents and the community. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include: (1) the overwhelming flow of information and social media algorithms that can create echo chambers; (2) the heterogeneity of students' religious understanding; (3) the school's limited control over students' digital activities outside of class hours; and (4) uneven levels of digital literacy among parents. These conditions indicate that the implementation of religious moderation in the digital age is influenced not only by the learning process at school but also by the social and digital environments that surround students' lives.

In this era, digital transformation has advanced rapidly over the past decade and has transformed the way people search for and discover information, build their identities, and even understand religious teachings. The digital space has now become a new arena for religious discourse, ranging from da'wah and scholarly studies to debates that often lead to polarization. Current phenomena such as the rise of online-based radicalism, the spread of religious misinformation, and the culture of mindlessly copying and pasting religious texts without deep understanding demonstrate that technological advancement does not always go hand in hand with the religious maturity of believers (Hajri, 2023). In this context, the ability of the public especially students to understand religion in a moderate manner has become an urgent necessity.

Religious moderation serves as an approach that offers balance by rejecting all forms of extremism, whether radical or liberal (Suryadi, 2022). Its values align with the principle of "rahmatan lil 'alamin," which positions religion as a guide for a peaceful, adaptive life that respects diversity. However, efforts to instill religious moderation cannot be carried out through conventional means alone. Religious moderation will teach students how to view various issues, attitudes, and religious practices in daily life. The essence of religious teachings is applied to protect human dignity and foster benefits grounded in justice, balance, and adherence to the constitution as a national consensus. Internalizing the values of religious moderation in education is an effort teachers can undertake to integrate learning activities with moderate Islamic values (Khasanah et al., 2023).

In an era when students interact more with digital devices than with textbooks, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) must transform to serve as both a bulwark and a compass for navigating the torrent of religious information in the digital world. The challenges of the digital age actually present significant opportunities for integrating religious moderation into IRE. Digital media enables teachers and educational institutions to deliver learning experiences that are more interactive, contextual, and closely aligned with students' social realities. Furthermore, the challenges facing the current digital era include a waning sense of affiliation with religious institutions, a shift in theoretical understandings of religion, and the rise of individualism. Furthermore, in fostering religious moderation, educators must develop instructional designs that cultivate and strengthen multiple literacies to broaden students' perspectives (Subiantoro, 2023). Moreover, the prevalence of instant, superficial understandings of religion which often conflict with the principles of religious moderation can lead students to absorb information without first verifying its accuracy.

Another challenge that has emerged is the still-limited digital literacy among both students and educators. Some teachers still face difficulties in utilizing digital media as a tool for education and the promotion of religious moderation (Ilmi & Mukti Nasrowi, 2026). Teachers play a crucial role in advocating for religious moderation through social media, but not all of them possess adequate digital readiness and competence. These limitations can hinder the optimal use of digital media as a space for religious education that is inclusive, critical, and moderate. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy among educators is a vital component in supporting the implementation of religious moderation through Islamic Religious Education in the digital age (Irwansyah Suwahyu, 2025).

D. Conclusions

Based on the research findings, Islamic Education teachers at SMKN 4 Mataram generally understand religious moderation as an attitude characterized by fairness, tolerance, respect for differences, rejection of violence and bullying, and wise use of digital media. This has been implemented through lesson planning, group discussions, participatory learning, providing prayer spaces according to students' beliefs, fostering mutual respect, and learning evaluations, although its application is not yet consistent among all teachers. Challenges identified include excessive use of electronic devices, the influence of social media, the diversity of religious information sources on the internet, and the reluctance of some students to accept guidance. This study contributes to providing a contextual overview of the

practice of religious moderation in PAI instruction at the vocational high school level in the digital age. A limitation of this study is that the scope of the location and informants was restricted to a single school; therefore, the findings cannot yet be generalized to other educational institutions. Future research is recommended to involve more schools and informants and to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain a broader picture of the effectiveness of PAI teaching strategies in strengthening religious moderation in the digital age.

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