

Religious moderation analysis in Islamic religious education textbooks for Class XI students

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the representation of religious moderation values in the Islamic Religious Education and Ethics textbook for class XI used at SMA Labschool Cirendeu and SMA Kharisma Bangsa and identify differences in their presentation patterns. The research uses a qualitative approach with content analysis. The research object is textbooks published by Yudhistira and Quadra. Data were collected through documentation studies, which were strengthened by semi-structured interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers and learning observations. The analysis was carried out based on four indicators of religious moderation from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture. The validity of the data was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques. Both books integrate the four indicators of religious moderation, although they differ in intensity and pedagogical strategies. Yudhistira's book uses a contextual-integrative approach by connecting Islamic teachings with local social, national, and cultural life, while Quadra's book emphasizes conceptual, systematic, and applicative approaches. Tolerance is the most dominant indicator, while accommodation to local culture is more strongly represented in Yudhistira's book; conclusion: Both books contribute positively to strengthening religious moderation through PAI learning. Teaching materials still need development, especially to present a more proportionate representation of the four indicators through concrete examples, real problems, diverse experiences, and local cultural contexts, so religious moderation does not stop at cognitive understanding but can develop into students' social attitudes and practices.

Keywords: Religious Moderation; Islamic Religious Education; Textbooks; Tolerance; Diversity.

Introduction

Indonesia is one of the most diverse countries in the world. According to Badan Pusat Statistik (2025), Indonesia's population in 2025 will exceed 284 million people, spread across thousands of islands with diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Badan Pusat Statistik (2015), Indonesia is also home to more than 1,300 ethnic groups and more than

700 regional languages. In the religious field, the population census shows that Indonesian society embraces six religions recognized by the state, with Islam as the majority, alongside Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian communities that coexist in the same social space. This diversity is a sociological reality and part of Indonesia's national identity, inseparable from the process of forming a nation-state.

In an ideal perspective, diversity is a social capital that is very important for strengthening national unity. Pancasila and the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* emphasize that differences are not positioned as a threat, but as a basis for living together within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The Constitution, through Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, guarantees every citizen the freedom to embrace religion and worship according to their beliefs. Therefore, the life of the nation normatively requires the development of tolerance, respect for others' religious rights, the ability to dialogue, and commitment to national values. In this context, education is seen as a strategic instrument to instill a culture of peace and respect for diversity from an early age.

However, social reality shows that religious life in Indonesia still faces serious challenges. Reports from the Wahid Foundation (2024) and Setara Institute (2025) in recent years show that there are still violations of freedom of religion and belief, rejection of the establishment of houses of worship, discrimination against minority groups, and acts of intolerance in various regions. In its annual report, the Setara Institute records hundreds of incidents and violations of religious freedom every year, by both state and non-state actors. Despite fluctuations in the number of cases, the data show that the problem of intolerance has not been fully resolved and is still a challenge to Indonesian democracy.

This phenomenon is also reflected in people's social attitudes. National surveys conducted by various institutions show that some people still tend toward religious exclusivism and object to coexisting on an equal basis with groups of different religions. These findings indicate that the internalization of tolerance and respect for diversity has not taken place optimally. This challenge is increasingly complex with the development of digital media that allows the rapid dissemination of religious discourse without an adequate verification process.

Social media algorithms tend to strengthen echo chambers, so users are more often exposed to views that align with their beliefs and less often interact with different perspectives (Cinelli et al., 2021). In the Islamic perspective, this idea has a strong theological foundation in the concept of *ummatan wasathan*, as stated in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]:143, which emphasizes moderation, proportionality, and distance from extremism. Formal education has a central position in internalizing the values of religious moderation. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that education aims to develop students' potential to become human beings with faith, piety, noble character, and democratic responsibility. In this framework, learning Islamic Religious Education and Ethics is not enough if it focuses only on mastering the cognitive aspects of religion; it must also form students' character to be open, tolerant, and respectful of diversity. Successful religious education not only produces students who understand their religious teachings but also enables them to coexist peacefully with adherents of other religions.

Textbooks are an important part of the learning process. Islamic Religious Education and Ethics textbooks are the main learning resources teachers and students use in school

learning activities (Li & Wang, 2024). Through narratives, illustrations, case examples, word choice, and material emphasis, textbooks shape students' perspectives on religion, society, and diversity (Harwood, 2017). Therefore, the content of textbooks ideally represents the values of religious moderation such as national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and an accommodating attitude towards local culture as formulated by the Ministry of Religion. The accuracy of representing these values greatly determines the direction of students' religious character formation.

However, textbooks do not always present religious moderation explicitly and proportionately. Some studies show that religious education materials still tend to emphasize normative-doctrinal aspects rather than developing dialogical and appreciative attitudes toward diversity (Anam et al., 2024; Ritonga & Nurmawati, 2025). Tolerance values may be conveyed only declaratively, without concrete examples, reflective activities, or narratives that help students understand the reality of a pluralistic society. In addition, differences in the characteristics of educational institutions can influence textbook selection and use, resulting in an emphasis on different values.

Research on religious moderation in education has indeed developed in recent years, but it has mostly focused on learning implementation, character building, curriculum development, or educational policy (Haris et al., 2024; Hatamudin et al., 2025). Research that specifically analyzes the representation of religious moderation values in high school Islamic Religious Education and Ethics textbooks remains relatively limited. Furthermore, comparative studies that compare textbooks used in schools with different institutional characteristics, for example, educational laboratory-based schools and schools based on excellence or international—are still rare. These limitations indicate important research gaps (Haris et al., 2024; Hatamudin et al., 2025) that need to be addressed.

Based on these conditions, this study analyzes the values of religious moderation in the Islamic Religious Education and Ethics class XI textbook used at SMA Labschool Cirendeu and SMA Kharisma Bangsa. The analysis used the Ministry of Religion's religious moderation indicators to identify how each book represents commitment to nationality, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture, and to compare the characteristics of their presentation. This research is important because the results are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the study of religious moderation in Islamic education and a practical contribution to preparing teaching materials that are more moderate, inclusive, and contextual to the needs of pluralistic Indonesian society. Thus, this research has academic relevance and social significance in supporting stronger harmony in religious life and national unity.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis to reveal the representation of religious moderation values in the Islamic Religious Education and Ethics class XI textbook. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine the meaning, message, narrative, illustration, and structure of material presentation in depth and systematically. The research object consists of two textbooks used at SMA Labschool Cirendeu (publisher: Yudhistira) and SMA Kharisma Bangsa (publisher: Quadra). Primary data are all textbook content, including subject matter, case examples, illustrations, learning

tasks, and character strengthening related to religious moderation. Secondary data are obtained from academic books, reputable scientific articles, policy documents from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, and other literature relevant to religious moderation and Islamic education. Selecting two textbooks from schools with different institutional characteristics aims to provide a richer comparative picture of how religious education teaching materials construct the value of moderation.

Data collection used documentation studies as the main technique, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers and classroom observations to understand the context of textbook use and validate interpretations of the analysis results. Data analysis was carried out in stages by identifying units of meaning, reducing data, categorizing themes, and interpreting them in depth based on four indicators of religious moderation set by the Ministry of Religion: commitment to nationality, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture. The analysis process was carried out repeatedly (*iterative analysis*) so that each finding consistently reflected the content of the text. To ensure the validity of the findings, the study used source triangulation and triangulation techniques, which involve comparing documentation data with interview and observation results. In addition, the researcher continuously checked the consistency of categories and interpretations to ensure the research results had high credibility, dependability, and reliability.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

An analysis of the Islamic Religious Education and Ethics textbook for grade XI used at SMA Labschool Cirendeu (Yudhistira) and SMA Kharisma Bangsa (Quadra) shows that both books integrate the values of religious moderation into the learning materials. The search used four indicators of religious moderation set by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia: commitment to nationality, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture (Ayu, 2024). These four indicators appear in both books, although their intensity and presentation patterns differ. Religious moderation is not presented as additional material; it is part of students' character formation through narratives, Qur'anic and hadith postulates, contextual illustrations, and learning activities that encourage inclusive attitudes and appreciation for diversity. To make it easier to read the results of the analysis, a comparison of the representation of the four indicators in the two books is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Comparison of Representation of Religious Moderation Values in PAI Class XI Textbooks (Source: processed by researchers, 2026)

Moderation Indicators	SMA Labschool Cirendeu (Yudhistira)	Kharisma Bangsa High School (Quadra)
National commitment	Explicit; integrated in moral material, Islamic history, and social life of Indonesian society	Explicit; associated with tolerance, peace, and national unity
Tolerance	Dominant; emphasizing respect for religious, ethnic, racial, and cultural differences	Very dominant; discussed systematically in the chapter on tolerance and coexistence
Anti-violence	Reject physical and non-physical violence; emphasize dialogue and deliberation.	Explain the forms of violence and their prevention strategies conceptually.

Moderation Indicators	SMA Labschool Cirendeu (Yudhistira)	Kharisma Bangsa High School (Quadra)
Accommodating to local culture	Quite strong; local culture is seen as the wealth of the nation as long as it does not contradict the teachings of Islam	Present but not too prominent compared to other indicators
Presentation characteristics	Contextual, narrative, and integrative	Conceptual, systematic, and applicative

Table 1 shows that both books represent four indicators of religious moderation, but with different pedagogical strategies. Yudhistira's book uses a contextual approach through socio-religious narratives and the life experiences of Indonesian people, while Quadra's book presents a more systematic and applicative conceptual structure. These differences do not reflect a conflict of substance, but rather variations in how students internalize the values of moderation. Yudhistira's book presents national commitment more explicitly. The learning material connects Islamic teachings with civic responsibility by discussing harmony, respect for ethnic, religious, racial, and cultural differences, and strengthening the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The presentation shows that piety is not understood solely as an individual practice, but also as an ethical awareness to maintain national unity. Islamic identity is positioned in harmony with national identity so students understand that religion can go hand in hand with commitment to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The book does not reduce commitment to nationality to a symbolic expression of love for the homeland. National values are built on recognizing diversity as a social reality that must be respected. The association between Islamic teachings and national unity gives students space to understand religion's integrative function in a pluralistic society. These findings align with the paradigm of religious moderation, which treats acceptance of national consensus and respect for the constitution as key indicators of moderate religiosity.

In Quadra's book, national commitment is presented through the discussion of tolerance and the avoidance of violence. Diversity is understood as *sunnatullah* that must be accepted positively so that students are directed to build inclusive and mutually respectful social relations. Tolerance is then linked to peace, harmony, and the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Through this approach, national values are not separated from Islamic teachings and are presented as part of a Muslim's moral responsibility in community life.

Anti-violence indicators also appear prominently in both books. In Yudhistira's book, the value of non-violence is represented through material that emphasizes safeguarding human life, rejecting violence, and resolving conflicts through dialogue and deliberation. The use of Q.S. Al-Mā'idah verse 32 and hadiths that prohibit murder shows that normative arguments are built on the principle of respect for life. Religious, ethnic, and cultural differences are not used to justify hostility but are framed as part of human diversity that must be respected.

The book's scope of non-violence is not limited to rejecting physical violence. The content analysis shows a rejection of discrimination, hate speech, intimidation, and other

actions that can undermine social harmony. The learning material encourages students to develop compassion, respect for human dignity, and problem-solving through a persuasive approach. Thus, anti-violence is understood as a comprehensive social ethic relevant to efforts to prevent radicalism in the educational environment.

In Quadra's book, the discussion of non-violence is arranged more systematically, explaining the forms of physical and non-physical violence and their impact on individuals and society. Q.S. Al-Mā'idah verse 32 serves as the main basis for affirming the universal value of protecting human life. In addition, the book outlines measures to prevent violence through a correct understanding of religion, the spread of good values, conflict avoidance, and respect for human dignity. The presentation shows that religious education is seen as an important instrument in building a humanist and moderate character.

Both books also show an accommodating dimension to local culture, although the emphasis differs. Yudhistira's book provides more space to discuss cultural diversity as part of *sunnatullah*. The community's traditions, language, and customs are seen as the nation's wealth as long as they do not conflict with the basic principles of Islamic teachings. This approach shows the integration between Islamic values and local culture, so religion is not rigidly imposed but can dialogue with the social reality of Indonesian society. Meanwhile, the representation of local culture in Quadra's book is less prominent than the discussion of tolerance and non-violence. Nevertheless, the book still recognizes the importance of respect for cultural diversity in the life of the nation. The difference in intensity shows that each book emphasizes religious moderation differently.

Interview results with Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMA Labschool Cirendeu strengthened the document analysis findings. Some teachers stated that the book's material adequately contained values of tolerance, love for the homeland, anti-violence, and respect for diversity. Learning is implemented through a habit of mutual respect, not ridicule; accepting differences; and providing opportunities for students of different religions to participate in inclusive learning. The consistency between the book's content and learning practice shows that religious moderation is internalized not only cognitively but also affectively and behaviorally.

Overall, this study confirms that the Islamic Religious Education and Ethics textbooks used at SMA Labschool Cirendeu and SMA Kharisma Bangsa represent the values of religious moderation in accordance with the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia's indicators. The differences found relate more to the level of emphasis and the strategy for presenting the material than to differences in the substance of the value. Therefore, the two books can be seen as learning resources that support the strengthening of religious moderation at the high school level. However, strengthening the accommodative dimension of local culture still requires presenting material that is more contextual and connected to the local community's cultural practices so students can fully internalize all indicators of religious moderation.

Discussion

The research findings can be understood first through the Ministry of Religious Affairs' conception of religious moderation. Religious moderation is not intended to reduce one's commitment to religious teachings, but to understand and practice religion in a fair, balanced

way and maintain a common life (Huber et al., 2022b). The four indicators used in this study—national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture—help show how these principles manifest in social life. The Ministry of Religious Affairs also links these indicators to *wasathiyah* values, including *tawassuth*, *i'tidal*, *tasamuh*, *muwathanah*, *al-la'unf*, and a friendly attitude towards culture (Hanif et al., 2025; MR et al., 2025). In this view, the finding that the four indicators appear in both books shows that religious moderation has moved from policy discourse to representation in PAI teaching materials. The textbooks not only convey knowledge about Islam but also offer a certain framework for how students place religion in social life. When religious material is associated with tolerance, peace, unity, and respect for culture, textbooks are essentially forming a connection between religious identity and social reality.

National commitment is one aspect that clearly shows this relationship (Anam, 2019). In the book Yudhistira, Islamic teachings are associated with unity, harmony, respect for differences, and the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. This pattern shows that Islamic identity is not placed above national identity. Instead, the two are brought together through the idea that religious life must contribute to maintaining national unity (Hidayat et al., 2026; Wibisono et al., 2019). This perspective aligns with the concept of *muwathanah*, namely the value of citizenship and love for the homeland, which, in the development of religious moderation, is positioned as part of moderate religiosity. In Quadra's book, national commitment is constructed more through tolerance, peace, and avoidance of violence. Diversity is understood as a part of social life that must be accepted, while national unity is positioned as a consequence of society's ability to manage differences. This approach shows that nationalism does not always have to be explained through direct civic narratives. National values can be built through social attitudes that respect others and reject actions that undermine societal cohesion (Huber et al., 2022). Thus, Quadra's book offers a more conceptual and applicable approach to constructing moderation than the stronger contextual approach in Yudhistira's book.

Furthermore, tolerance is the most prominent indicator in the overall findings. This dominance can be understood because tolerance is a dimension directly related to students' experiences in a pluralistic society (Huber et al., 2022). Within the framework of the Ministry of Religion, tolerance includes respecting differences, giving others space to exercise their beliefs and express their opinions, and being willing to live together without losing their respective identities. Therefore, when Yudhistira and Quadra's books relate tolerance to differences in religion, ethnicity, race, culture, and social life, the material not only teaches social manners but also introduces the principle of living together in a pluralistic society. The dominant position of tolerance also shows that PAI textbooks have undergone an expansion of functions. Books are not only a means of transmitting religious knowledge but also a medium for forming social dispositions. Students are not only directed to know that differences are a social reality, but also to develop attitudes that allow those differences to be managed peacefully (Anam et al., 2026; Mulyana, 2023). In this context, textbooks play a role in the hidden curriculum because the values conveyed through the selection of examples, narratives, illustrations, and learning activities can influence how learners perceive other groups.

The anti-violence indicators show a similar trend. Both books not only define violence as a physical act, but also lead to the rejection of discrimination, intimidation, hate speech, and acts that degrade human dignity. This expansion is important because religious moderation cannot be limited to the prohibition of physical violence. The Ministry of Religious Affairs explicitly places the rejection of violence, both physical and verbal, as one of the indicators of moderate religiosity. The book of Yudhistira draws on the Qur'an and hadith to provide a normative basis for rejecting violence. Q.S. Al-Mā'idah verse 32, for example, affirms the importance of respect for human life. Meanwhile, Quadra's book offers a more systematic discussion by explaining forms of violence and preventive measures. These differences show two pedagogical ways of conveying the same values. Yudhistira emphasizes the relationship between religious norms and social contexts, while Quadra emphasizes conceptual understanding and its application. Previous research has also found that the PAI book's value of non-violence can be constructed by rejecting coercion and using a compassionate approach to invite kindness.

The findings on accommodation to local culture add a distinctive dimension. Yudhistira's book provides ample space to understand that the community's traditions, language, customs, and culture are part of social reality and can be appreciated as long as they do not contradict the basic principles of Islamic teachings. This perspective is directly related to the indicators of *accommodation for local culture* used by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Moderation in this context means not only the ability to accept groups with different beliefs, but also the ability to build constructive relationships between religious teachings and the community's culture.

This aspect matters because previous research found that local culture is one of the dimensions that has received relatively little attention in PAI textbooks. For example, it was found that the PAI books at the junior high school level that were analyzed still provide limited space for moderation narratives, including descriptions of local culture and the relationship between Islam and culture. The findings show a more positive trend, especially in Yudhistira's book. Thus, this study not only confirms the existence of moderation indicators but also shows that there are variations in the development of moderation representations in teaching materials.' To make it easier to understand the differences in the characteristics of the two books, they can be summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Differences between the two textbooks (source: processed by researchers, 2026)

Dimensions	Yudhistira	Quadra	Theoretical Interpretation
National commitment	Integrated with social life, Islamic history, and moral formation	Associated with tolerance, peace, and national unity	Religious identity and national identity are constructed as two elements that complement each other
Tolerance	Presented contextually and associated with social diversity	Presented systematically and conceptualized more explicitly	Tolerance serves as a social competence to live in a pluralistic society

Dimensions	Yudhistira	Quadra	Theoretical Interpretation
Anti-violence	It is normative and contextual with the support of the Qur'an and hadith	Conceptual and applicative, including violence prevention strategies	Moderation translated from religious doctrine to social ethics
Accommodating to local culture	Relatively strong and contextually presented	Present, but the elaboration is relatively more limited	Religious education opens up a space for dialogue between Islamic teachings and the reality of Indonesian culture
Pedagogical orientation	Contextual-integrative	Conceptual-systematic	The same moderation framework can be conveyed through different pedagogical strategies.

Table 2 shows that the difference between the two books lies not primarily in the presence or absence of moderation values, but in the way they are framed pedagogically. Yudhistira's book tends to connect Islamic teachings with learners' social experiences, while Quadra provides a clearer conceptual structure before applying it. This distinction is theoretically important because it shows that religious moderation in textbooks results from a pedagogical construction process. The same value can result in different learning experiences when delivered through different narrative structures and learning strategies.

The findings also strengthen the view that the existence of moderation values in textbooks must be distinguished from the depth of their representation. An indicator may be present, but the depth of elaboration is not necessarily the same. Previous research on PAI books at the high school level found that religious moderation has indeed become part of the content of the book. However, the form and breadth of its representation need critical examination. Therefore, the assessment of textbooks is not enough based on the frequency of occurrence of the words "tolerance", "peace", or "diversity". The analysis must consider narrative context, relationships between ideas, the examples used, and whether these values translate into attitudes and actions.

The relationship between text and practice shows that the internalization of religious moderation takes place on at least three layers. The first layer is on the representation of knowledge, which is how the book explains the concepts of diversity, tolerance, violence, nationality, and culture. The second layer is the representation of attitudes, which are the values intended for students to accept and develop. The third layer is on social practice, when these values are translated into real interactions in the classroom and school environment. Research on moderation in PAI learning also shows that the value of moderation can move from the aspect of knowledge to socio-religious activities and practices.

Thus, the results of this study show that PAI textbooks for grade XI play a strategic role in building students' religious paradigm. Yudhistira and Quadra's books both tend to construct religious education that connects individual piety with social responsibility. National commitment connects religion with civic life; tolerance builds the ability to manage

differences; anti-violence affirms respect for human dignity; while local cultural accommodation expands the space for dialogue between Islam and Indonesian culture.

However, the findings also show room for further development. Strengthening religious moderation in textbooks should not stop at a normative presentation of values. However, it should be expanded through real cases, students' experiences of diversity, social problems in the surrounding environment, and examples of local cultural practices. This is important so that students not only understand moderation as a religious concept, but can also use it as a framework to read and respond to real-life problems.

Overall, both books show a positive orientation towards strengthening religious moderation. The difference lies in the level of emphasis and pedagogical strategies used. Yudhistira is stronger in the contextual-integrative approach, especially in connecting religion with local social and cultural life. Quadra emphasizes a conceptual-systematic approach, especially in discussing tolerance and non-violence. These findings show that religious moderation in textbooks is not just a matter of incorporating four indicators into the material, but a matter of how these indicators are constructed into knowledge, attitudes, and action orientations. At this point, the development of PAI teaching materials needs to focus on forming a religiosity that is not only normatively strong but also socially mature, contextual, and able to live constructively in a pluralistic Indonesian society.

Conclusion

This study shows that the Islamic Religious Education and Ethics textbook for class XI used at SMA Labschool Cirendeu and SMA Kharisma Bangsa has integrated four indicators of religious moderation from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture. These four indicators are not only presented as normative concepts. However, they are integrated through religious materials, postulates of the Qur'an and hadith, illustrations, examples of behavior, and learning activities related to students' social life.

The two books share similarities in substance but differ in presentation. Yudhistira's book is more contextual-integrative, especially in connecting Islamic teachings with local social, national, and cultural life. Meanwhile, Quadra's book is more conceptual-systematic and applicative, especially in the discussion of tolerance, peace, and non-violence. Tolerance is the most prominent indicator, while accommodation to local culture receives relatively stronger attention in Yudhistira's book. These differences show that the representation of religious moderation is determined not only by the existence of a value, but also by the depth and pedagogical strategy used to present it.

The findings confirm that PAI textbooks are strategically positioned as a medium for forming students' religiosity that is not only normatively strong but also socially responsible in a pluralistic society. Developing further teaching materials should strengthen the presentation of the four moderation indicators in a more proportionate way through concrete examples, real cases, diverse experiences, and local cultural contexts. Thus, religious moderation is not just knowledge students understand but can develop into attitudes and behavioral orientations in daily life.

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