

STRENGTHENING MODERATE CHARACTER EDUCATION IN STUDENTS THROUGH ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUBJECTS AT SABILUR ROSYAD HIGH SCHOOL KARANG MIMBA LARANGAN BADUNG PALENGAAN PAMEKASAN

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the process of strengthening students' moderate character education through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School, identify challenges and obstacles faced in its implementation, and provide strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of moderate character education in rural schools. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, this research collected data through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The research subjects involved PAI teachers, principals, students, and parents to get a comprehensive picture of the practice of moderate character education in the school. The results showed that the strengthening of moderate character in Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School is done through the integration of religious moderation values into the PAI curriculum, the use of interactive learning methods, and religious activities that support the habituation of these values. The main challenges faced include the diversity of student backgrounds, limited educational facilities, and the lack of teacher training related to teaching moderation values. Nevertheless, the implementation of moderate character education has had a positive impact, as seen from changes in students' attitudes that are more tolerant, inclusive, and able to appreciate differences. This study emphasizes the importance of additional support, such as teacher training, the development of moderation-based learning modules, and collaboration between schools and communities, to improve the effectiveness of moderate character education in rural schools.

Keywords: Moderate Character Education, Islamic Religious Education, Moderation Values

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis proses penguatan pendidikan karakter moderat siswa melalui mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di SMP Sabilur Rosyad, mengidentifikasi tantangan dan hambatan yang dihadapi dalam penerapannya, serta memberikan rekomendasi strategis untuk meningkatkan efektivitas pendidikan karakter moderat di sekolah pedesaan. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Subjek penelitian melibatkan guru PAI, kepala sekolah, siswa, dan orang tua siswa untuk mendapatkan gambaran yang komprehensif mengenai praktik pendidikan karakter moderat di sekolah tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penguatan karakter moderat di SMP Sabilur Rosyad dilakukan melalui integrasi nilai-nilai moderasi beragama ke dalam kurikulum PAI,

penggunaan metode pembelajaran interaktif, serta kegiatan keagamaan yang mendukung pembiasaan nilai-nilai tersebut. Tantangan utama yang dihadapi meliputi keberagaman latar belakang siswa, keterbatasan fasilitas pendidikan, dan minimnya pelatihan guru terkait pengajaran nilai-nilai moderasi. Meski demikian, implementasi pendidikan karakter moderat ini berdampak positif, terlihat dari perubahan sikap siswa yang lebih toleran, inklusif, dan mampu menghargai perbedaan. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya dukungan tambahan, seperti pelatihan guru, pengembangan modul pembelajaran berbasis moderasi, dan kolaborasi antara sekolah dan masyarakat, untuk meningkatkan efektivitas pendidikan karakter moderat di sekolah pedesaan.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan Karakter Moderat, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Nilai-Nilai Moderasi

INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the main pillars in building a noble, moral, and integrity generation. In the context of education in Indonesia, character education has become a concern of the government, especially with the inclusion of character education as an integral part of the 2013 Curriculum. (Bahri, 2022). The goal is to produce students who are not only academically intelligent but also have strong national, religious, and humanitarian values. Among the various characters to be built, religious moderation is an important aspect that is pursued in building a harmonious Indonesian society amidst the diversity of cultures, religions, and customs.

Religious moderation is the key to avoiding extremism, both in the form of radicalism and liberalism. Moderation emphasizes balance, tolerance, and respect for differences. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic role in shaping students' moderate character. Adha & Darmiyanti, (2022) Explain this is because PAI not only serves to provide religious knowledge, but also to instill moral values and Islamic characters that include tolerance, peace, and respect for diversity. This research was conducted at SMP Sabilur Rosyad Karang Mimba, Larangan Badung, Palengaan, Pamekasan, an educational institution located in a rural area with a majority Muslim population. This location was chosen because it has unique social characteristics, where strong Islamic traditions combine with the dynamics of modern life. In addition, special attention is given to PAI subjects as a means of strengthening students' moderate character education.

This study uses the theory of character education developed by Thomas Lickona, which emphasizes three main aspects of character building: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. (Durachman dkk., 2021). Moral knowing refers to the understanding of moral values, moral feeling is related to emotional awareness of these values, and moral action is the application of values in daily life. (Arifin dkk., 2022). In addition, the concept of religious moderation used in this study refers to the idea of Islamic Wasathiyah proposed by Muhammad Abduh. Wasathiyah emphasizes the principles of balance, justice, and tolerance which are the main characteristics of Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin. This theory is relevant in the context of PAI education, as it helps students relatively understand Islam and is relevant to pluralistic social life.

Various previous studies have examined strengthening character education through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects in various contexts. Anisa, (2020) Highlighted the influence of character education through PAI in improving students' religious tolerance in secondary schools, showing that this approach is effective in encouraging mutual respect among students with diverse religious backgrounds. Furthermore, Saraswati & Hidayat, (2019) Found that the thematic approach in PAI learning has a significant role in building moderation values in students in urban school environments, where social complexity and diversity are a challenge. Anggadwita dkk., (2021) Focused his research more on the implementation of religious moderation values in Islamic boarding schools, emphasizing the importance of the exemplary role of teachers in instilling moderate attitudes in students. Meanwhile, Hasyim, (2015) Evaluated the effectiveness of value-based learning methods in PAI, which turned out to be very helpful in shaping student character under Islamic values. Anan, (2020) This study examines the integration strategy of religious moderation values in the PAI curriculum in private schools, revealing that the planned incorporation of moderation values in the curriculum can strengthen students' character.

However, the majority of these studies tend to focus on the context of education in urban areas or Islamic boarding schools, so not many have explored the application of religious moderation values through PAI in rural schools (Zhafiroh & Zaman, 2020). In-depth studies on this practice in schools such as Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School, which is located in a rural socio-cultural environment, are still very limited. This suggests a gap that is important to fill through this research. This research is novel in two main aspects: first, it focuses on the rural school context that often receives less attention in character education research; second, it provides an in-depth analysis of the integration of religious moderation values in PAI subjects, which includes curriculum approaches, teaching methods, and teacher roles.

In contrast to previous studies that emphasize urban or Islamic boarding school contexts, this study offers a new perspective by examining how religious moderation values are implemented in rural schools with unique socio-cultural backgrounds. In addition, this study not only discusses the teaching outcomes but also the implementation process and challenges faced by teachers in integrating moderation values into PAI learning (Yuhani`ah, 2022). The increase in intolerance and extremism among teenagers is a real threat to national unity. Education is at the forefront of counteracting this, especially through approaches that instill religious moderation values. Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School, as an educational institution in a rural area, has a strategic role in shaping the moderate character of students who can become role models in their community. By understanding how moderate character education is implemented in this school, the results of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the development of PAI education in schools with similar characteristics.

This study aims to analyze in depth the process of strengthening students' moderate character education through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at Sabilur

Rosyad Junior High School. The main focus of this research is to understand how the values of religious moderation are integrated into PAI learning and applied in students' lives. In addition, this study also aims to identify the challenges and obstacles faced in the process of implementing these moderation values in the school environment. By examining various obstacles, both in terms of curriculum, teaching methods, and socio-cultural factors, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive insight into the dynamics of moderate character education in rural schools. As part of its contribution, this research will also offer strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of moderate character education in rural schools, so that it can have a positive impact not only on students but also on the surrounding community.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the process of strengthening moderate character education in students through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School. Case studies are considered relevant because they allow researchers to explore the specific context of this school, including the social, cultural, and religious environments that influence the implementation of religious moderation values. (Iswadi dkk., 2023). Data in this study were collected through several main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with PAI teachers, principals, students, and parents to get a comprehensive view of the implementation of moderate character education. Participatory observation was conducted during the PAI learning process to observe teaching methods, interactions between teachers and students, and how moderation values are taught and practiced in the classroom. In addition, documents such as syllabi, lesson plans, and school activity records were analyzed to see how religious moderation values were systematically integrated with the learning process.

The collected data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This process involves grouping the data into certain themes relevant to the research objectives, such as strategies for strengthening moderate characters, implementation challenges, and learning outcomes achieved. Data validity was guaranteed through source and method triangulation techniques so that the results of the research could be trusted and accurate. Through this method, it is expected that the research can produce an in-depth understanding of the process of strengthening moderate character education at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School and provide strategic recommendations to improve its effectiveness in similar schools, especially in rural areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the strengthening of moderate character education through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School runs in a structured and sustainable manner. The strengthening process involves various elements, including teachers, students, and the school environment, with an approach that

emphasizes the integration of religious moderation values into the curriculum and daily learning practices.

The Strengthening Process of Moderate Character Education

PAI teachers at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School play a central role in building students' moderate character. Based on observations and interviews, teachers consistently integrate the values of religious moderation into the teaching materials. For example, when discussing the concept of *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, the teacher not only explains the importance of brotherhood among Muslims but also relates it to interfaith tolerance. Teachers use various learning methods, such as group discussions and case studies, to encourage students to think critically and understand the importance of moderate attitudes in everyday life. In addition, the habituation of moderation practices is carried out through school religious activities, such as recitation, celebration of Islamic holidays, and discussions between students. These activities are designed to strengthen values such as tolerance, cooperation, and respect for differences. The school environment also supports the strengthening of moderate character through an inclusive school culture and the active involvement of parents in religious and social activities.

Challenges and Barriers to Implementation

However, this study also found some challenges in the implementation of religious moderation values at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School. One of the main challenges is the diversity of students' social backgrounds and levels of religious understanding. Some students come from families with religious views that tend to be conservative, thus requiring a special approach to instill moderate attitudes. In addition, limited educational facilities in rural schools are a significant obstacle. For example, access to relevant teaching materials and other supporting resources is limited. Teachers often have to develop their materials to ensure that the values of religious moderation can be properly taught. Another challenge is the lack of specific teacher training on the integration of moderation values in learning. PAI teachers in this school generally learn by themselves or through experience, without adequate formal training in teaching the values of religious moderation.

Results of the Implementation of Religious Moderation Values

Despite facing various challenges, the results of the implementation of moderate character education at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School show a positive impact. Based on interviews with students, they began to show changes in behavior, such as appreciating differences more, being inclusive of friends who have different views, and avoiding unnecessary conflicts. Observations also showed that students who were exposed to teaching moderation values through PAI tended to be more active in class discussions and more open in accepting different views. They can reasonably express their opinions and respect the opinions of others, which is one of the indicators of the success of moderate character education. In addition, the integration of religious moderation values in extracurricular activities also has a significant impact. Students involved in activities such

as interfaith discussions or Islamic writing competitions show a better understanding of the importance of moderation in religious life.

Discussion

The results of this study are in line with Thomas Lickona's theory of character education, which emphasizes the importance of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in the formation of student character. In the context of Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School, moral knowing is reflected in students' understanding of the values of religious moderation taught in PAI subjects. Moral feeling emerges through the emotional experience they get in religious activities, while moral action is manifested in changes in daily behavior that are more moderate and inclusive (Wafa, 2023). This research also supports the idea of Wasathiyyah Islam which emphasizes balance and tolerance as the hallmark of Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin. In practice, Wasathiyyah values are translated into PAI learning that teaches the importance of tolerance, respect for differences, and a constructive critical attitude. However, the findings also highlight the need for increased institutional support to overcome the barriers faced by schools. For example, specialized teacher training on teaching religious moderation values could be a solution to improve teachers' capacity to integrate these values into learning.

This research produces some strategic recommendations to support the strengthening of moderate character education in rural schools, particularly in Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School. These recommendations are based on the challenges and opportunities identified during the research, to create a more supportive educational environment for the formation of moderate student characters. According Umar & Hendra, (2020) The government has a key role in creating an educational ecosystem that supports the strengthening of religious moderation values. Providing adequate educational facilities is a very important first step. For example, the government can provide assistance in the form of technological equipment for digital learning, relevant reference books, and teaching materials specifically designed for rural contexts. In addition, teacher training and mentoring programs need to be improved. This training should include methods of integrating religious moderation values into learning, value-based learning strategies, and classroom management techniques that support dialogue and tolerance. By improving teacher competence, the teaching process can be more effective and have a direct impact on strengthening student character.

The government also needs to provide incentives to teachers serving in rural areas to increase their motivation and commitment. These incentives can be in the form of special allowances, housing facilities, or rewards for their dedication to educating the younger generation. The development of structured and contextualized learning modules is an urgent need. The module should be designed to help teachers convey the values of moderation systematically and engagingly. The learning materials need to contain case studies relevant to the lives of students in rural areas so that they can easily understand and internalize the values of moderation in their daily lives. The module can also include

a thematic approach that connects moderation values with other topics, such as tolerance in social life, respect for diversity, and the importance of cooperation across cultures and religions (Syafei & Abdillah, 2020). In this way, students not only understand the values of moderation theoretically but are also able to apply them in various aspects of life. To ensure the module is effective, the government can work with education experts, academics, and education practitioners from various backgrounds. In addition, a pilot test of the module in several pilot schools can be conducted before the module is widely implemented.

Cooperation between schools, local communities, and religious organizations is a strategic step to strengthen the implementation of moderate character education. Local communities, such as community leaders and religious leaders, can be involved in school activities that aim to strengthen the values of religious moderation (Abulhul, 2021). For example, they can give lectures or become facilitators in interfaith discussions involving students and parents. Religious organizations can also act as strategic partners in providing educational resources, such as teaching materials, teacher training, and character development programs. In addition, these organizations can serve as a link between the school and the wider community, so that the values of moderation can be applied not only in the school environment but also in the surrounding community.

Extracurricular activities can be an effective means to strengthen moderate character education. Schools can develop programs such as interfaith discussions, Islamic writing competitions, or social activities that involve students from various backgrounds. These activities not only enrich students' horizons but also train them to work together in an inclusive atmosphere and respect differences. In addition, strengthening extracurricular activities based on arts and culture can also be an alternative to instill moderation values. Art and culture have a universal appeal that can be a fun and effective medium for learning. For example, students can be invited to perform dances, music, or dramas that raise the theme of tolerance and harmony.

Another important recommendation is the need for continuous evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of moderate character education in schools. This evaluation can be carried out periodically to measure the extent to which the implemented programs have succeeded in achieving the desired goals. Teachers, students, and parents can be involved in the evaluation process to provide constructive feedback. The results of this evaluation can then be used as a basis for improving the moderate character education program in the future. In addition, schools can collaborate with research institutions or universities to conduct in-depth studies on the impact of moderate character education on student development. This study will provide empirical data that can serve as a reference for other schools in adopting similar programs.

Local governments also have an important role in supporting the strengthening of moderate character education. Local-based policies that suit the needs and potential of the region can be an effective solution. For example, local governments can develop

community-based programs involving schools in their areas. This policy should be supported by an adequate budget allocation to ensure the sustainability of the program. In addition, collaboration between local governments, schools, and local communities should be continuously strengthened to create positive synergies.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the strengthening of moderate character education through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School has been carried out systematically and shows positive results. The strengthening process involves integrating religious moderation values into the curriculum, discussion-based learning methods, and case studies, as well as school religious activities that support student character building. PAI teachers play an important role as facilitators and role models in instilling moderation values, which include tolerance, inclusiveness, and respect for differences. However, the study also revealed some challenges faced by the school, including the diversity of students' backgrounds, limited educational facilities, and the lack of specialized training for teachers. These barriers indicate the need for additional support from both the government and the community to optimize the implementation of moderate character education in rural schools. Nevertheless, students who were exposed to learning moderation values showed significant behavioral changes, such as increased tolerance, openness, and the ability to communicate reasonably.

This study also found that the success of strengthening moderate character education at Sabilur Rosyad Junior High School supports the theory of character education and the concept of Islamic Wasathiyah which emphasizes balance and tolerance. With the right reinforcement strategy, religious moderation values can be an integral part of learning, even in a school environment with limited resources. This research confirms the importance of strengthening moderate character education in building a tolerant and inclusive young generation. For sustainability, it is necessary to increase teacher training, develop moderation-based learning modules, and collaborate between schools and communities to create a supportive educational ecosystem.

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