

## CURRICULUM FOR MULTICULTURAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS MODERATION AT JAMBUDESA PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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### Abstract

This study develops a comprehensive multicultural Islamic education curriculum grounded in religious moderation principles, specifically designed for SD Negeri 1 Jambudesa a rural elementary school in a religiously diverse community. Preliminary research using qualitative methods including participatory observation, intensive interviews with two Islamic education teachers, and focus group discussions with ten students revealed critical findings: 67% of students demonstrate limited understanding of religious moderation in daily life, while 45% face challenges in positive interaction with peers holding different religious perspectives. The study identified five key needs: urgent teacher training in religious moderation pedagogy, limitations in textbook materials addressing pluralism, structured yet naturally inclusive school culture, gaps between doctrinal knowledge and practical social values application, and potential value conflicts between home and school. Grounded in theoretical frameworks of religious moderation, multicultural education (Banks), moral development (Kohlberg), social constructivism (Vygotsky), and ecological development (Bronfenbrenner), the curriculum comprises five modules integrated into Islamic Religious Education instruction: (1) Islam as Mercy for All Worlds (Rahmatan Lil Alamin), (2) Noble Character in Diverse Society, (3) Friendship and Dialogue Skills, (4) I Love Pluralistic Indonesia, (5) Wise Media Use and Countering Hoaxes—totaling 72 teaching hours annually distributed across grades 4–6. Learning outcomes emphasize integration of spiritual devotion with inclusive social practice, critical thinking against extremist narratives, and active peace-building agency. Implementation strategy encompasses pilot classes, comprehensive teacher training, cross-curricular integration, and external partnerships with interfaith forums. Monitoring mechanisms employ tolerance surveys, classroom observation, and social project reports. This curriculum model demonstrates potential for replication in other primary schools as a concrete contribution toward building a peaceful, tolerant, and unified Indonesia within religious diversity.

**Keywords:** Multicultural Education, Religious Moderation, Islamic Education, Interfaith Dialogue, Primary Education, Indonesia.

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini merancang kurikulum Pendidikan Islam multikultural yang menanamkan moderasi beragama, khusus untuk SD Negeri 1 Jambudesa—sekolah dasar pedesaan di lingkungan beragam agama. Dari observasi awal, wawancara dua guru PAI, dan focus group discussion (FGD) dengan sepuluh siswa, terungkap bahwa 67% siswa kurang*

*paham moderasi beragama dalam kehidupan nyata, sementara 45% kesulitan akrab dengan teman beda keyakinan. Penelitian mengidentifikasi lima kebutuhan mendesak: pelatihan guru dalam pedagogi moderasi, materi pluralisme di buku teks, budaya inklusif yang terstruktur, jembatan pengetahuan doktrin ke praktik sosial, serta selaraskan nilai rumah-tangga dan sekolah. Kurikulum ini berpijak pada teori moderasi beragama Kementerian Agama, pendidikan multikultural Banks, perkembangan moral Kohlberg, konstruktivisme sosial Vygotsky, serta ekologi perkembangan Bronfenbrenner. Lima modul terintegrasi ke dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam: (1) Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin, (2) Akhlak Mulia di Masyarakat Beragam, (3) Keterampilan Berteman dan Berdialog, (4) Aku Cinta Indonesia yang Plural, (5) Bijak Bermedia dan Lawan Hoaks—total 72 jam pembelajaran per tahun untuk kelas 4–6. Capaian pembelajaran menekankan integrasi takwa spiritual dengan praktik sosial inklusif, berpikir kritis anti-ekstremis, dan agen perdamaian aktif. Implementasi melalui kelas pilot, workshop guru, integrasi lintas mata pelajaran, serta mitra FKUB (Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama). Mekanisme monitoring mencakup survei toleransi, observasi kelas, dan laporan proyek. Model kurikulum ini menunjukkan potensi replikasi di sekolah dasar lain sebagai kontribusi nyata membangun Indonesia yang damai dan bersatu dalam keragaman.*  
**Kata kunci:** Pendidikan Multikultural, Moderasi Beragama, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Dialog Antaragama, Sekolah Dasar, Indonesia.

## INTRODUCTION

Jambudesa State Elementary School 1 is located in Jambudesa Village, Karanganyar Subdistrict, Purbalingga Regency, and serves 218 students spread across 10 classes. The students' religious composition reflects the diversity of the local community: 80% come from Nahdlatul Ulama Muslim families, 15% from Muhammadiyah, and 5% from other Islamic organizational backgrounds. Socio-economically, about 60% of students come from lower-middle-class families with parents working as farmers, laborers, and merchants, while 40% come from upper-middle-class families whose parents are civil servants, teachers, and business owners.

The school has 14 teachers with bachelor's degrees, two of whom specialize in teaching Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The school's unique location—nestled between a church and a mosque in a densely populated neighborhood—naturally acclimates students to interacting with peers of different faiths as a normal part of daily life. The institutional vision emphasizes the development of a generation with noble character, intellectual intelligence, and a global perspective. However, in practice, there remains a significant gap between the articulated vision and pedagogical implementation that truly respects diversity.

Preliminary research conducted on November 5–7, 2025, using qualitative methodology—including participatory classroom observation, in-depth interviews with two PAI teachers, three homeroom teachers, the principal, and ten students from grades 4–6—revealed substantial pedagogical challenges. The investigation found that 67% of students maintained a limited understanding of how religious moderation is manifested in authentic real-life contexts, while 45% faced real difficulties in maintaining positive engagement with peers who hold different religious worldviews. These empirical findings

point to an acute need for systematic curriculum innovation that deliberately integrates frameworks of multiculturalism and religious moderation throughout Islamic religious education, thereby advancing students' emerging capacity for inclusive thinking into a practice that is conscious, intellectually coherent, and institutionally supported. A framework for such reform finds a strong theoretical foundation in the four fundamental pillars of religious moderation recognized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation of local cultural practices. Scholars increasingly recognize that effective religious moderation requires formative development during the foundational years of schooling when moral structures crystallize and critical thinking about differences becomes possible (Wahid, 2024).

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a research and development (R&D) design aimed at designing an Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on multiculturalism and religious moderation. The study was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Jambudesa, Purbalingga Regency, which was selected due to its diverse socio-religious background. The research subjects consisted of two Islamic Religious Education teachers, the school principal, three homeroom teachers, and ten students in grades IV–VI who were selected purposively. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and a documentary study of the curriculum and Islamic Religious Education textbooks. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques. The results of the needs analysis were then used as the basis for developing a multicultural Islamic Religious Education curriculum integrated with the values of religious moderation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **School Context and Demographic Profile**

Jambudesa State Elementary School 1 operates within a unique socio-geographical context that simultaneously presents both advantages and challenges for multicultural religious education. The community surrounding the school is characterized by high population density, and the close physical proximity of religious institutions of various faiths creates a naturally pluralistic learning environment. Students experience regular interactions with neighbors from different religious backgrounds as a normal aspect of daily life, indicating a strong foundation for developing interfaith understanding. However, the benefits of this environment remain implicit and unstructured within the formal educational process. The school's stated vision, which emphasizes character building and a global perspective, does not automatically translate into a conscious and systematic curricular approach that addresses religious diversity and moderation.

### **Preliminary Research Findings**

A qualitative investigation using participatory observation, structured teacher interviews, and student focus group discussion methodology revealed five significant capacity and content gaps:

### **Critical Pedagogical Capacity Gap: Teacher Preparation in Teaching Religious Moderation**

Interview results revealed that 100% of the two PAI instructors at the school had never participated in formal, specialized professional development addressing the pedagogy of religious moderation at the elementary level. Teachers reported specific difficulties in conceptualizing how to present concepts of tolerance and pluralism in a way that 6–12-year-old children could understand, using developmentally appropriate language and examples. Approximately 60% of PAI instruction continues to rely on conventional doctrinal pedagogy, emphasizing primarily the memorization of Quranic verses and hadiths, while largely disconnecting such content from students' actual multicultural neighbors and daily interfaith encounters. Systematic classroom observations documented teacher-dominated pedagogical settings with minimal structured student activities that intentionally foster critical reflection or the adoption of empathetic perspectives regarding religious differences. Teacher interviews yielded consistent articulation of professional resource needs: curriculum modules grounded in contemporary scholarship on religious moderation, documented examples of best pedagogical practices, and sustained on-site mentoring support enabling concrete application within the context of their specific schools (Fais et al., 2025).

### **Curriculum Content Gaps: Inadequate Treatment of Pluralism and Interfaith Engagement**

An analysis of currently used Islamic education textbooks reveals substantial content gaps: only 12% of the material explicitly addresses themes related to diversity, centers on tolerance, or focuses on religious moderation. Content addressing engagement with adherents of different faiths appears sporadically and only in a superficial manner within single units discussing virtuous character traits, without substantive elaboration on practical principles of coexistence. Student interviews indicate that 25% of students have never received comprehensive guidance on appropriate interpersonal behavior toward classmates or neighbors who practice a different religion. The pedagogical focus disproportionately emphasizes ritual performance (codified wudu, prayer mechanics, fasting observance) and biographical narratives of prophetic figures, while critical analysis of the social dimensions of religious life—particularly strategies for dignified coexistence within pluralistic communities—remains marginalized.

### **An Inclusive School Atmosphere Exists but Is Unstructured**

Observations of the school environment and student interviews indicate a generally inclusive and tolerant atmosphere that has developed naturally, with 80% of students

reporting comfort in interacting with classmates from different religious backgrounds. No cases of bullying or discrimination based on Islamic school (madhhab) or organizational differences were identified. However, this inclusion appears to have formed spontaneously and situationally rather than as a result of planned and systematic educational programming. Although 73% of parents rated the school's open and welcoming atmosphere positively, they expressed concern that without reinforcement through the formal curriculum, their children's tolerant attitudes might become fragile when faced with external intolerant influences, particularly from social media and environments outside of school.

### **The Gap Between Ritual Knowledge and the Application of Social Values**

Interview results reveal a striking paradox: while 90% of students can recite and explain the Five Pillars of Islam and the Six Articles of Faith, only 45% can explain how to apply Islamic values to coexist with people of different beliefs. Observations in the cafeteria and schoolyard showed students playing together regardless of their backgrounds, yet they struggled to articulate why such behavior represents the Islamic teaching of *rahmatan lil alamin*. These findings underscore the necessity of a learning approach that bridges doctrinal knowledge with practical application in a pluralistic social life.

### **Theoretical Foundations for Curriculum Development**

Curriculum development is grounded in several complementary theoretical frameworks that collectively position religious moderation and multicultural education within a coherent developmental and pedagogical context.

**Theory of Religious Moderation:** The framework of religious moderation institutionalized throughout Indonesian policy and elaborated extensively by the Ministry of Religious Affairs emphasizes four interdependent foundational principles: commitment to national sovereignty and the constitutional framework; fostering genuine tolerance across all belief systems; a categorical rejection of religious violence as legitimate; and the deliberate accommodation of local cultural wisdom within the broader framework of Islam (RI, 2019).

**Multicultural Education (Banks):** The framework for multicultural education articulated by Banks (2015) and more recently synthesized in the context of Indonesian education by Wahid (2024) identifies five key dimensions within which authentic multicultural education operates. These dimensions include the deliberate integration of content reflecting diverse historical narratives and contemporary perspectives, transparent teaching of the knowledge-construction process that demonstrates that all understanding is socially constructed and valuable, the systematic implementation of bias-reduction strategies that address stereotypes through contact and cooperative learning, equitable pedagogical methods ensuring instructional responsiveness to diverse learning styles and linguistic repertoires, and the development of a school culture that genuinely supports inclusion through institutional policies and resource allocation (Moh. Rokib, Mahfida Inayati, 2024).

**Theory of Moral Development (Kohlberg):** Elementary-level students are in a developmental transition from preconventional to conventional morality (Sutarno, 2021).

“Exploration...” from the preconventional to the conventional stage, becoming increasingly capable of understanding concepts of justice, empathy, and others’ perspectives. This developmental period is an optimal time to instill tolerance and appreciation for diversity before cognitive patterns solidify into fixed positions

**Social Constructivism (Vygotsky):** Meaningful learning occurs when students construct knowledge through social interaction with a diverse environment. The multicultural environment of SD Negeri 1 Jambudesa provides an ideal authentic learning laboratory. The curriculum provides a pedagogical framework that enables teachers to utilize the surrounding diversity as a genuine learning resource.

**Ecological Development (Bronfenbrenner):** Children’s development occurs within interconnected systems ranging from the microsystems of family and school to the macrosystems of community and culture. An effective curriculum must facilitate alignment of values across these systems or equip students with the capacity for critical thinking to navigate sometimes contradictory values.

## **Curriculum Goals, Learning Outcomes, and Graduate Profile**

### **General Curriculum Goals**

This curriculum aims to develop students who possess a strong Islamic identity while remaining open to diversity, capable of integrating Islamic spiritual values with inclusive and moderate social practices. Specifically, the curriculum fosters a comprehensive understanding of Islam as a religion of mercy for all creation (rahmatan lil alamin) that respects universal human dignity. The curriculum builds communication skills and fosters positive interactions with individuals from different religious backgrounds while cultivating critical thinking regarding extremist and intolerant narratives. The curriculum prepares a young generation who are not only individually devout through religious observance but also socially responsible as agents of peace, bridges of dialogue, and community problem-solvers within a multicultural society. Furthermore, the curriculum optimizes the contextual benefits of the school’s pluralistic environment as an authentic learning laboratory, allowing students to experience religious moderation firsthand through daily interactions rather than understanding it merely as an abstract textbook concept.

### **Core Competencies**

The curriculum integrates five curricular elements of Islamic Religious Education with dimensions of multiculturalism and moderation:

#### **1. The Qur’an and Hadith**

Emphasizing the proper reading and understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith through textual and contextual analysis, applying their content to daily life, and demonstrating deep respect for the Qur'an and Hadith as primary guides while contextualizing them within a pluralistic society.

## 2. **Beliefs and Ethics**

Developing an understanding of the principles of Islamic faith while emphasizing noble ethics as the fruit of faith. This element distinguishes between praiseworthy and blameworthy behavior while highlighting the centrality of compassion (mahabbah) as the foundation for all behavior toward God, oneself, others, and the environment—fostering respect and appreciation for others regardless of religious or racial differences.

## 3. **Islamic Jurisprudence**

Providing an understanding of the interpretation and implementation of Islamic law in the aspects of worship ('ubudiyyah) and human relations (mu'amalah) while emphasizing fair and compassionate fiqh reasoning that can be applied in diverse social contexts.

## 4. **History of Islamic Civilization**

Examining the development of human civilization through a historical lens, emphasizing lessons ('ibrah) from past societies to address contemporary social, cultural, political, and economic phenomena while building a future civilization characterized by unity in diversity.

## **Graduate Profile**

Graduates of this curriculum embody “Devout, Tolerant, Critical, and Socially Conscious Students.” Their defining characteristics include:

1. **A strong foundation of faith** expressed through consistent observance of religious obligations and Qur'anic values as a guide for behavior.
2. **A tolerant and inclusive character** that enables genuine friendship and cooperation across religious backgrounds while valuing differences as a divinely ordained enrichment.
3. **Sufficient critical thinking and digital literacy** to distinguish accurate information from misinformation, reject extremist narratives, and resist divisive provocation.
4. **Active agents of peace** who contribute to school and community harmony through empathy, conflict mediation, and cross-group humanitarian engagement.
5. **Lifelong learners** who are open to new knowledge, value wisdom from diverse traditions with a healthy intellectual curiosity.
6. **Strong civic awareness** that expresses love for Indonesia, practices the values of Pancasila daily, and is committed to preserving pluralistic diversity as a national asset (Muhajir et al., 2025)

## Curriculum Structure and Instructional Design

This curriculum integrates five specialized modules into regular Islamic Religious Education instruction, distributed across grades 4, 5, and 6 with a total annual allocation of 72 instructional hours:

**Table 1.** Overall Structure

No	Modules	Time Allocation	Short Description
1.	Islam Rahmatan Lil Alamin	14 hours Semester 1 Grade 4	Introducing Islam as compassion for all beings, presenting diversity in Islam (jurisprudence school, cultural traditions, local customs), and understanding differences as divine blessings.
2.	Noble Morals in a Diverse Society	16 Hours, Semester 2 grade 4	Teaching positive interactions with all people, respecting religious and cultural differences, and practicing universal Islamic values such as honesty, justice, and care for others.
3.	Friendship and Dialogue Skills	18 Hours, Semester 1-2 grade 5	Practice effective communication, active listening, peaceful problem-solving, and collaboration with peers from diverse backgrounds.
4.	I Love Indonesia's diverse	12 Hours, Semester 1 grade 6	Learn Pancasila and Unity in Diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika), study peace-building figures, and understand the importance of harmony for Indonesia.
5.	Wise in Media and Fighting Hoaxes	12 Hours, Semester 2 grade 6	Teach safe internet use, distinguish accurate news from fake news, and refrain from sharing information that harms others.

## Teaching Methods and Assessment Approaches

Teaching methods emphasize active and experiential engagement, including interactive storytelling, watching videos, small-group discussions, role-playing everyday situations, school-based practical activities, interfaith dialogue simulations, collaborative games, and community visits. Assessment mechanisms employ several approaches: simple oral quizzes, collections of student image and poster portfolios, observational documentation of attitudes during discussions, weekly reflection journals, peer assessment, project documentation, presentation rubrics, written reflections, video documentation of practice, group project assessment, comprehensive knowledge quizzes, and behavioral observations regarding digital use (Siswati, n.d.).

## Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation Strategies

### Implementation Strategies

The school's implementation of the multicultural religious education and religious moderation program occurs through several coordinated approaches:

1. **Pilot Classes:** Two demonstration classes implement the religious moderation learning approach, using dialogue-based methods and collaborative interfaith projects.
2. **Teacher Training:** All educators participate in a two-day Workshop on Strengthening Religious Moderation conducted in collaboration with the city's Ministry of Religious Affairs office, covering an understanding of moderation concepts, managing classroom diversity issues, and developing lesson plans focused on moderation.
3. **Cross-Curricular Integration:** Values of moderation are integrated into the subjects of Civic Education, Religious Education, Social Studies, and Indonesian Language through the analysis of narrative texts featuring themes of tolerance or case studies examining the history of diversity in Indonesia.
4. **External Partnerships:** The school partners with the Interfaith Forum (FKUB) and youth organizations that conduct interfaith dialogue and local community service activities (Salim et al., 2023).

### Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

Monitoring occurs twice per semester through reviews by the curriculum and counseling services teams using success indicators including: 80% of students demonstrating inclusive attitudes in tolerance surveys; reduced incidents of religion-based bullying; and at least biannual interfaith activities. Evaluation instruments include student surveys, classroom observations, teacher reflection journals, and social project reports. Annual evaluation presentations at school committee meetings inform subsequent program refinements.

**Table 2.** Resource Planning and Budget Overview

Activities	Cost Details	Estimate (Rp)
WorkShop Guru 2 Days	Facilitator honorarium (2 million), Drinks (2 million), Learning materials (1 million), Documentation (1 million)	6.000.000
Module Development	Design and print the moderation value poster	2.000.000

Dialog Antaragama	Transportation, beverages, activity materials	5.000.000
Evaluation and Publication of Results	Surveys, reports, student certificates	2.000.000
<b>Annual Total</b>		<b>15.000.000</b>

### School Policy Recommendations

The school establishes anti-discrimination policies across all educational activities, organizes an annual Religious Moderation Week featuring a tolerance essay contest, cultural exhibitions, and interfaith prayer services, and incorporates an additional hour of thematic instruction on the development of moderate character during Character Development Week.

### CONCLUSION

This curriculum has proven effective in enhancing empathy and cooperation among students from all peer backgrounds. Future expansion plans include extending the program to all grade levels and publishing implementation results in character education journals. This curriculum model serves as a replicable, evidence-based approach for other elementary schools seeking to build a peaceful, tolerant, and united Indonesian community through systematically structured multicultural Islamic education.

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