

The Role of PAI Teachers in Internalizing Character Values to Realize Students' Religious Moderation at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah, Makassar City

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INFORMASI ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
Article History: Received: 22 February 2026 Revised: 25 February 2026 Accepted: 24 July 2026 Published: 25 July 2026 Kata Kunci: Peran Guru PAI; Internalisasi Nilai Karakter; Moderasi Beragama.	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam menginternalisasi nilai-nilai karakter untuk mewujudkan moderasi beragama peserta didik di SMPIT Ar-Rahmah Kota Makassar, serta mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat yang memengaruhi proses tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan perspektif fenomenologis. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis melalui tahapan pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru PAI menjalankan perannya sebagai <i>mu'allim</i>, <i>murabbi</i>, <i>mursyid</i>, <i>uswatun hasanah</i>, motivator, dan evaluator melalui keteladanan, pembiasaan nilai karakter dalam pembelajaran dan budaya sekolah, serta bimbingan keagamaan yang humanis. Internalisasi nilai moderasi beragama berlangsung melalui pengalaman belajar yang membentuk perilaku toleran, seimbang, dan menghargai perbedaan. Faktor pendukung meliputi kebijakan sekolah, program pembinaan karakter, dan kerja sama orang tua, sedangkan faktor penghambat mencakup perbedaan karakter peserta didik, pengaruh lingkungan luar sekolah, dan keterbatasan sumber daya manusia. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya sinergi sekolah, guru, dan keluarga dalam penguatan moderasi beragama.
Keywords: Islamic Education Teachers; Character Values; Religious Moderation.	ABSTRACT This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in internalizing character values to promote students' religious moderation and to examine the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the success of this process at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah, Makassar. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological perspective. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education teachers perform their roles as <i>mu'allim</i>, <i>murabbi</i>, <i>mursyid</i>, <i>uswatun hasanah</i>, motivators, and evaluators through exemplary behavior, habituation of character values in learning activities and school culture, and humanistic religious guidance. The internalization of religious moderation values occurs primarily through lived experiences, resulting in students' behavior that reflects tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity. Supporting factors include school policies, structured character development programs, and collaboration with parents, while inhibiting factors involve students' diverse characteristics, external environmental influences, and limited human resources. This study highlights the importance of synergy among schools, teachers, and families in strengthening religious moderation. This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license. 

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country with a very high level of social, cultural, and religious diversity. This condition of plurality becomes a national asset, but at the same time presents serious challenges in maintaining the harmony of national and religious life. Differences in religious views, ways of worship, and religious expressions have the potential to give rise to exclusivity and social conflicts if not managed wisely. In some cases, differences in religious understanding even develop intolerant attitudes that threaten social cohesion and national unity. Therefore, a religious perspective is needed that can place religious teachings proportionately, not excessively, and still respect pluralistic social reality. In this context, religious moderation is understood as a strategic approach to build a balanced, fair, and tolerant attitude of diversity in social life (Kementarian Agama, 2019).

Religious moderation is not only related to theological aspects, but also concerns social attitudes that are manifested in daily life practices. Quraish Shihab, in his book, emphasizes that religious moderation is a manifestation of the *Wasathiyah* Islamic paradigm, which emphasizes a balance between commitment to religious teachings and openness to differences. This perspective places religious moderation as an active attitude that demands awareness, dialogue, and respect for diversity, not just normative discourse or policy slogans. (Shihab, 2020) Thus, religious moderation must be internalized in an ongoing manner in order to form a moderate mindset and behavior. The internalization process cannot be separated from the role of education, because education is the initial space for the formation of ways of thinking, attitudes, and characters of the younger generation.

In this study, character values are interpreted as a set of moral and social values that are the basis of students' behavior, such as religiosity, tolerance, justice, responsibility, discipline, respect for differences, and social concern. These values are closely related to religious moderation because they both emphasize balance, respect for others, and rejection of extremism.

Educational institutions, especially schools, have a strategic position in the process of internalizing the value of religious moderation. Schools not only function as a place for knowledge transfer, but also as a social environment that brings together students from various social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Interactions that occur in schools provide a space for students to learn to coexist, appreciate differences, and manage differences constructively. Through a structured and sustainable education process, the values of tolerance, justice, and respect for diversity can be systematically instilled. This is in line with the direction of the national education policy, which emphasizes the strengthening of character education and the value of diversity as an integral part of the national education goals (Kemendikbud RI, 2020).

In the context of Islamic Education, Islamic Religious Education has a very important role in shaping students' attitudes toward diversity. Islamic Religious Education not only aims to improve religious understanding cognitively, but is also directed at the formation of attitudes, values, and character of students so that they are able to practice religious teachings in moderation. However, the reality in the field shows that religious learning is still often oriented towards the cognitive aspect and mastery of the teaching material. (Bungahari et al., 2025) reveals that there is a gap between students' religious understanding and the implementation of religious values in daily behavior.

This condition shows that religious learning has not fully touched the affective and behavioral dimensions of students. Therefore, it is necessary to instill values and provide systematic and sustainable coaching by Islamic Religious Education teachers to students in order to form a harmonious school life. This effort is important to prevent the emergence of various forms of behavioral deviation, such as bullying between students, intolerance, radicalism, and violence, as well as to strengthen national commitment as part of students' character in a pluralistic society. (Fauzi et al., 2025) Thus, strengthening religious moderation through Islamic Religious Education requires

an approach that emphasizes the process of internalizing values as a whole, not just the delivery of religious materials.

A number of previous studies have examined the role of PAI teachers in instilling the values of religious moderation. Previous research has shown that PAI teachers play an important role in shaping students' moderate attitudes through dialogical, inclusive, habitual, and exemplary learning strategies. However, these studies tend to focus on aspects of the curriculum, formal learning, or the role of teachers partially. There have not been many studies that specifically place the internalization of character values as the main foundation for the formation of students' religious moderation in integrated Islamic schools, using a phenomenological approach.

Istiqomah & Rifai (2025) emphasized that PAI teachers have a strategic role as mu'allim, murabbi, mursyid, uswatun hasanah, motivators, and evaluators in guiding students towards a better personality, both in this world and in the hereafter. This concept emphasizes that religious education must touch the dimension of values and character through example and habituation. Mahdi (2025) added that the internalization of character values in PAI learning can be done through habituation and positive social interaction in the school environment. Meanwhile, (Ulfa, 2025) highlighted the role of integrated Islamic schools in building character education based on religious moderation through religious school habituation and culture habituation programs. However, these studies still tend to place the role of teachers partially or emphasize formal programs and learning.

Religious moderation can be instilled through learning, example, and habituation in the school environment. However, studies that specifically place the internalization of character values as the main foundation for the formation of religious moderation, as well as examine the role of PAI teachers holistically in school life, are still relatively limited.

Based on this description, this study has a research gap in the absence of a study that specifically examines the internalization of character values as the basis for religious moderation of students at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah, Makassar City through the role of PAI teachers holistically. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in internalizing character values to realize the religious moderation of students at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah, Makassar City, as well as identify supporting and inhibiting factors that affect their success.

2. Research Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological perspective. This approach was chosen because the research seeks to understand the life experiences, daily practices, and meanings built by PAI teachers in the process of internalizing character values to realize students' religious moderation at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah, Makassar City (Lumbu et al., 2026).

The research was carried out at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah, Makassar City. The research informants consisted of school principals, vice principals for student affairs, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and students. The selection of informants was carried out purposively by considering their direct involvement in the implementation of character development and strengthening religious moderation in the school environment. (Sugiyono, 2023).

The source of research data includes primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with informants. Secondary data was obtained through documentation studies, such as school program documents, disciplines, learning tools, and other supporting documents relevant to the research focus.

The data collection technique is carried out in three ways. First, participatory observation to observe learning practices, school culture, and social interactions that reflect the internalization of character values. Second, in-depth interviews to obtain data on the experience, views, and strategies

of PAI teachers in fostering students. Third, documentation to strengthen field findings and trace the consistency between school programs and practices carried out.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself, which is supported by observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation formats. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which included data reduction, data presentation, and continuous conclusion or verification.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member check. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing information from school principals, teachers, and students. The triangulation technique was carried out by matching the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Meanwhile, member checks are carried out to ensure that the data and interpretation of the researcher are in accordance with the intention of the informant.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1 The Role of PAI Teachers in Internalizing Character Values

The results of the study show that the role of PAI teachers at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah Makassar City is not limited to the delivery of religious materials, but is implemented comprehensively in the process of fostering students' character oriented to the values of religious moderation. The internalization of these values takes place through various roles carried out by PAI teachers simultaneously and continuously, both in formal classroom learning and in the school culture and daily activities of students.

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation studies, PAI teachers carry out six main roles, namely as *mu'allim*, *murabbi*, *mursyid*, *uswatun hasanah*, motivator, and evaluator. The six roles form a unity of educational practices oriented toward the formation of a balanced, tolerant religious attitude and keeping students away from extreme attitudes in religion.

a. PAI Teacher as *Mu'allim*

As *mu'allim*, PAI teachers convey Islamic knowledge that is not only normative-doctrinal, but also contextual and relevant to the social reality of students. Teaching materials are delivered with a dialogical and reflective approach so that students are encouraged to understand religious teachings rationally and proportionally. The results of the observation show that PAI teachers consistently emphasize the understanding of Islam as a religion that upholds the values of tolerance, justice, and balance in community life. This approach has an impact on the formation of students' religious understanding that is not rigid and not exclusive. Although some students do not understand the concept of religious moderation terminologically, their behavior reflects an attitude of mutual respect for differences, not being easily judged, and being able to interact harmoniously with friends who have different backgrounds.

b. PAI Teacher as *Murabbi*

The role of *murabbi* can be seen in the efforts of PAI teachers to foster students' spiritual and moral awareness through structured character value habituation. PAI teachers not only teach in the classroom, but are also actively involved in character development programs that are school policies, such as routine religious activities, discipline habituation, and social behavior coaching. The principal emphasized that each school activity is designed with clear character indicators, so that students not only participate in activities regularly, but also understand the moral values they want to grow. This practice shows that the internalization of the value of religious moderation is not done instantly, but through a consistent and programmatic coaching process.

c. PAI Teacher as *Mursyid*

As *mursyid*, PAI teachers provide religious guidance that is personal and humanistic. Teachers are a reference point for students in dealing with moral, social, and religious problems. The results of the interviews showed that PAI teachers do not use a judgmental approach, but guide students through dialogue, advice, and reinforcement of persuasive values. This approach contributes to the creation of a positive emotional connection between teachers and students. Students feel safe expressing their religious opinions and experiences, so the process of internalizing values takes place in a more in-depth and meaningful way. This personal guidance is an important factor in preventing the development of extreme diversity attitudes in students.

d. PAI Teacher as *Uswatun Hasanah*

The example of PAI teachers is the central finding in this study. PAI teachers consciously display a moderate attitude in speech, behavior, and social interaction in the school environment. Students observe firsthand how teachers are fair, respect differences, and resolve conflicts wisely.

Inconsistency in teachers' attitudes can weaken the moral message conveyed, so that example is the main prerequisite in character education. These findings confirm that the internalization of the value of religious moderation occurs more through real examples than through theoretical explanations.

e. PAI Teachers as Motivators

PAI teachers also act as motivators who provide psychological and spiritual reinforcement to students. Teachers encourage students to practice religious values in daily life in a balanced manner, without coercion and without excessive attitudes. Motivation is provided through appreciation of students' positive behavior in learning and school social-religious activities (Lesmana et al., 2024).

This motivational reinforcement helps students develop internal awareness to behave moderately in religion. Students not only follow the rules because of obligations, but because they understand the value and benefits of these attitudes in life together.

f. PAI Teacher as an Evaluator

As evaluators, PAI teachers conduct an assessment of students' attitudes on an ongoing basis. The evaluation focuses not only on the cognitive aspect, but also on students' behavior and religious attitudes in their daily lives. The assessment is carried out through observation, attitude notes, and communication with homeroom teachers and parents of students (Chandra et al., 2025).

The results of the evaluation are used as a basis for providing further coaching, especially for students who show a tendency to be less tolerant or have difficulty internalizing character values. This evaluative approach shows that the internalization of the value of religious moderation is understood as a long-term process that requires continuous assistance.

3.1.2 Supporting Factors and Inhibiting Factors

This study also found that the success of internalizing the value of religious moderation is influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors. The main supporting factors include school policy support, structured character development programs, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, and cooperation between schools and parents of students.

On the other hand, inhibiting factors include differences in students' character, the influence of the environment outside the school, including social media, limited human resources, and the lack of optimal involvement of some parents in character development at home. This condition shows that

the internalization of the value of religious moderation cannot be fully imposed on PAI teachers, but requires continuous synergy between schools, families, and the community environment.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of the study show that PAI teachers have a multidimensional role in building students' religious moderation through the internalization of character values. This role is not only seen in formal learning, but also in habituation, example, personal guidance, motivation, and continuous evaluation. This shows that effective religious education does not only develop cognitive aspects, but also touches the affective and behavioral dimensions of students. This finding is in line with Imron's (2023) research, which emphasizes that the role of PAI teachers in fostering religious moderation must be carried out comprehensively, not only through formal learning in the classroom.

The role of teachers as *mu'allim* emphasizes the importance of delivering religious teachings in a contextual and dialogical manner so that students do not understand religion narrowly or exclusively. Meanwhile, the role of *murabbi* and *mursyid* shows that the internalization of character values requires consistent coaching and humanistic educational relationships. In this context, the teacher's example as *uswatun hasanah* is a very decisive factor, because students more easily absorb grades through real experience than just through verbal explanations. This is consistent with the findings of Safiqo and Ghofur (2025), who stated that the role of PAI teachers in shaping the religious character of students in the digital era is largely determined by their role model and personal approach, as well as the research of Hidayat et al. (2026) which emphasizes the importance of the multidimensional role of PAI teachers in shaping the religious character of students.

The findings of this study also show that motivation and evaluation have an important function in maintaining the sustainability of the value internalization process. When students get positive reinforcement and continuous evaluation, they not only obey school rules, but also build internal awareness to be tolerant, fair, and balanced in their daily lives. This is in line with Marauleng et al. (2024) who show that the role of teachers in internalizing character values in students is greatly influenced by the consistency of motivation and evaluation, and Rasyid et al. (2025), who prove that the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education learning has a significant effect on strengthening students' morals.

The supporting and inhibiting factors found confirm that the success of internalizing character values is determined not only by the capacity of teachers, but also by the educational ecosystem as a whole. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation requires close collaboration between teachers, schools, parents, and students' social environment. These findings reinforce the research results of Ridho et al. (2025), who show that the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education learning based on the affective domain contributes to the success of value internalization, and Sazliana et al. (2025), who affirm the role of PAI teachers in overcoming deviant behavior of students as part of supporting factors for strengthening character. In addition, Ningsih et al. (2024) found that the role of PAI teachers in counseling guidance programs also strengthens the handling of inhibiting factors in schools, while Rahmawati et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of developing learning resources as a supporting factor in Islamic Religious Education learning. Sugianto et al. (2026) also found that the quality of the implementation of the national curriculum also influences the success of this process, in line with Mulyadi et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of developing varied PAI learning methods. Wardana (2024) added that the professionalism of Islamic teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is an important supporting factor, while Zulkifli et al. (2024) and Sitorus et al. (2025) highlight the importance of evaluating and improving the quality of learning based on Islamic values as part of interrelated supporting and inhibiting factors. Hasanah (2026) strengthens this finding by showing that strengthening religious literacy through PAI guidance programs in rural schools is also a relevant supporting factor.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that PAI teachers have a very strategic role in internalizing character values to realize the religious moderation of students at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah, Makassar City. This role is carried out multidimensionally as *mu'allim*, *murabbi*, *mursyid*, *uswatun hasanah*, motivator, and evaluator, who together form a balanced, tolerant, and contextual attitude of students' religious attitudes.

The findings of the study also show that the success of internalizing the value of religious moderation is influenced by school policy support, consistency of character development programs, and synergy between teachers, schools, and parents. On the contrary, differences in student character, the influence of the environment outside the school, and limited human resources are challenges that need to be overcome together.

This study has limitations in the scope of the location that focuses on only one school, so generalization of the findings needs to be done carefully. Therefore, further research is recommended to examine the internalization model of character values and religious moderation in the context of different schools or educational levels.

Based on the results of the research, PAI teachers are advised to continue to strengthen their role not only as teachers of religious materials, but also as role models and character builders of students. School principals need to develop more systematic, measurable, and sustainable character development policies and programs. Parents also need to be more actively involved through intensive communication and cooperation with the school. For future researchers, it is necessary to develop a more comprehensive evaluation instrument to measure the impact of internalizing character values on students' religious moderation attitudes.

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