

Aceh Madrasas

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Implementation of the Program for Strengthening Religious Moderation in Aceh Madrasas

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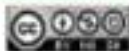
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Abstract

Madrasah institutions play a critical role in fostering religious moderation, serving to educate future generations with balanced attitudes and thoughts. This study investigates the understanding and awareness of religious moderation among students at MAN 4 Aceh Besar and explores the programs designed to strengthen this concept. Additionally, it examines the factors that support or hinder the success of these programs. A mixed-methods approach, encompassing integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques, was employed to analyze the data. Quantitative data analysis determined the level of student understanding, while qualitative methods provided insights into program implementation and influencing factors. Findings reveal that students at MAN 4 Aceh Besar perceive an 80.8% understanding and awareness of religious moderation, integrating the institution as successful in supporting its objectives. Religious moderation programs are integrated into both teaching materials and extracurricular activities, resulting in a holistic approach. Supporting factors for the program's success include moral and material backing from stakeholders. However, challenges arise from both internal and external influences, which may hinder the program's effectiveness. The religious moderation program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar has effectively fostered student awareness and understanding, underscoring the institution's commitment to cultivating moderate perspectives. Continuous support and strategic intervention are necessary to address the identified challenges and sustain the program.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Phenomena like *Islamophobia* is unique and cannot be separated from humanity itself. Diversity cannot be fought because it has become an acknowledged, shared, Karamazov, American, European, & Arabistians (2019). However, if pluralism is not addressed well, it can potentially lead to division, therefore a positive attitude is needed through the realization of religious moderation. The concept of *moderation* is also called *Maqashid* (justice, etc.). This motivates Muslims to behave inclusively, openly, moderately, accommodate and be tolerant towards religious adherents, cultural groups or other persons who have different religious, ethnicity.

Tolerance and radicalism have spread on all fronts in Indonesia (Bhatnagar & Itri, 2022). The rise of terrorism and radicalism has created awareness that there is another face of Islam that is different from Islam in general. This negative causal anticipation. Family and school are the first and foremost bastions for providing moderate Islamic education (Lusy et al., 2022; Achmad, Rahmat, & Kusnadi, 2023). Islam opposes anti-moderate attitudes (B. A. Khatib, 2019; Mubandazika, Azmi, Majidulham, Anwar, & Anwar, 2022; Mawarung & Aulia, 2020). Moderate values can be spread through education (Lusy et al., 2022; Achmad, Anzalis, Khairunnisa, & Abdillayah, 2022). Moderate Islamic education can prevent students from behaving radically. On the other hand, moderate education will have implications for the understanding of Muslims to accept all forms of religious differences and be able to respect the beliefs held by other people (A. Khatib, 2017). Religious moderation not only accepts religious differences, but also accepts differences in culture, profession, and even differences in understanding (Jalali & Fayadi, 2021). Making educational institutions a moderation laboratory is the right choice in approaching religion (Gusriana, 2019). Strengthening religious moderation is a realistic effort to resolve all differences (Rachet al., 2023).

The **radical** problem in Indonesia was **unique** to the local area, especially in Aceh. One of the Malacca sultan, **SAAN**, 4 Aceh **beard**, had problems with religious moderation, namely, a phenomenon among students where, at the time, the clothed head of OSBM assigned because he thought that the students who joined extracurricular activities did not have the same frequency as him, this seemed to be different from institutions affiliated with him. These students have the intention to easily blame others and had that they are the worst students.

From that, fully happened between students regarding differences in ethnicity, language and others, such as the phenomenon of making fun of students who cannot speak the language used in Madrasah in general, such as making fun of students who cannot speak *Kurdish* and also students who cannot speak Indonesian.

The researcher can make it by observing the behavior of other not through again and can be said that the occurrence problems at the Madrasah, the author is trying to implement a religious education program in a school that is considered capable of overcoming the problem.

Expected results are the students' interest in solving the main problem, instead of their mind do nothing at all.

Many studies have addressed religious motivation in educational contexts. For example, Abdul Syukur (2020) examined higher education strategies for strengthening religious moderation (UM Alauddin Makassar through curriculum enhancements to promote radicalism). While relevant to the concept of *tauhid* in curricula, *tauhid* focus on higher education differs from this study. Similarly, Nurwani et al. (2021) analyzed the integration of religious moderation into Islamic university learning, highlighting limited implementation among lecturers. Bacharudin and Ihsan (2022) explored the typology of religious moderation at PTGDN institutions, identifying integrative models, cultural interpretation, and international Islamic education. These findings focus on higher education, contributing with this study's focus on secondary education.

Further, Nagahie et al. (2009) assessed Islamic values and moderation in learning, concluding that Islamic education teachers implement moderation values from planning to evaluation. However, this research primarily concentrates on the teaching process, unlike this study, which comprehensively evaluates all institutional systems.

A gap remains in examining religious moderation programs holistically at the madrasah level. Most existing research centers on higher education or specific aspects like curricula or teaching processes. This study addresses this gap by exploring religious moderation at MAN 4 Aceh Besar, focusing on students' understanding and awareness, the institutional programs designed to foster moderation, and the factors influencing these programs.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to religious moderation in a secondary education context, considering both curricular and extra-curricular dimensions. Its findings are significant in developing practical strategies to nurture moderate attitudes and address challenges in implementing such programs.

2. METHODS

This research employed a case study design with a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of religious moderation at MAN 4 Aceh Besar. The study utilized analytical descriptive techniques to deeply explore and clearly describe the implementation of religious moderation programs within the institution. This approach was selected to gain a nuanced understanding of the program's impact and dynamics.

The research subjects included both teachers and students. From a total student population of 400, a sample of 48 participants was selected randomly to ensure representation. For teacher participants, purposive sampling was used to select the principal and three key teachers involved in program implementation. Data reliability was ensured through triangulation, incorporating cross-verification from multiple participants and sources.

Data collection employed multiple techniques, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and triangulation. The triangulation of data enhanced students' understanding and awareness of religious moderation, which were then integrated into qualitative descriptions to provide deeper insights. Triangulation of data from various methods and participants ensured the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

Data analysis was conducted in three stages:

1. Data Reduction: Classifying and organizing data according to the research questions, including identifying relevant themes from observations and interviews.
2. Data Presentation: Systematically displaying the classified data, highlighting patterns and correlations within the program's implementation.
3. Data Verification: Interpreting the consolidated data to derive meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness and challenges of the religious moderation program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar.

This rigorous methodological framework allowed for a holistic understanding of the program's outcomes and its contributions to fostering religious moderation.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Nature of Religious Moderation

The word moderation stems from Latin *moderatus*, which means not excessive or lacking the most abundant self-control (from an attitude of excessiveness and deficiency). Oxford Indonesian Dictionary (OED) provides two meanings of the word moderation, namely reducing violence and avoiding extremes. It is said "that person behaves moderately," that someone also means that the person behaves naturally, normally, and not violently. (Titi Paryanti Komenditor, Agusta RI,

2019). Meanwhile, the word *moderate* in Arabic is known as *al-mu'tadil*. As in *al-Qur'an* (Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143):

وَقَدْ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِمَن يَعْلَمُ مِنْ تَوَلَّى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ حَيْثُ يَخْرُجُ إِلَى حُدُودِهِ عَلَى الدِّينِ عَدْلًا وَبِرًا مِمَّا جَاءَ
بِالصَّبْرِ وَالْعِلْمِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالشَّيْءِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ۝

It means, "And thus Allah has made you (Muslims) a just and chosen people so that you will be a witness for (Islamic) of people and for the Messenger (Muhammad) to be a witness for (Islamic) of you, and surely we determine the Qibla which is just (Qibla). Al-Baqarah: 143. (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2014)

Word at-Mu'tadil in the word *al-mu'tadil* means the best and most perfect. In the *hadith* it is also stated that *al-mu'tadil* question is the way in the middle; in the sense of seeing and resolving a problem, moderate Islam tries to take a compromise approach and be in the middle, as well as in responding to differences, whether religious or sectarian differences. Moderate Islam always prioritizes an attitude of tolerance, mutual respect while still believing in the truth of the beliefs of each religion and maintain it, that everyone did *al-mu'tadil* actions fairly, without having to get involved in attacks which (Syafa, 2022). Without balance and justice, calls for religious moderation will be ineffective. Thus, moderation means that each person stand not fundamental in each perspective. Both must try to find a common ground.

Moderate Islam is a religious understanding that is very relevant in the context of diversity in all aspects, including religion, customs, ethics, and the nation itself. The variety of religious understanding is a historical fact in Islam. The logical consequence of that statement is the emergence of views that follow behind the word *Islam*. For example: Fundamental Islam, Liberal Islam, Progressive Islam, and many other labels. (Dafis, 2017).

One of the scholars who explained moderation was Yusuf al-Qaradawi. He revealed four the signs of moderation include: (1) comprehensive understanding of Islam; (2) balance between strict provisions and changing times; (3) support for peace and respect for human values; (4) recognition of pluralism of religious, culture and politics and (5) recognition of minority rights. (Azzahra, 2016).

In Muslim-majority countries, the attitude of moderation at a minimum includes recognition of the existence of other parties; a tolerant attitude, respect for differences of opinion, and the non-imposition of one's will through violence. This is based on verses from the Quran, including respect for diversity and the willingness to interact. Qs. Al-Hajjari: 13.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكُمْ فِرْقًا وَلَئِنَّا لَآتِيكُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَأَنْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِهِمْ ۝

It means "O mankind, we have indeed created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know yourselves. Indeed, the most honorable among you in the eyes of God is the most pious among you. Indeed, Allah is al-knowing and al-knowing." Qs. Al-Hajjari: 13. (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2014).

These basic criteria can actually also be used to characterize moderate Muslims in Muslim minority countries such as America, England and others. Moderate Islam describes moderate Muslims as people who express Islam in a peaceful manner and are willing to coexist peacefully with believers of other religions and are compatible with democracy and the separation of politics and

religion (Shiddiq, 2014). Religious moderation must be understood as a balanced religious attitude between the practice of one's own religion (faithful) and respect for the religious practices of others of different beliefs (tolerant).

Based on the explanation above, it can be understood that faith encompasses it seems to be a moderate attitude in religion. This moderation is reflected in the term *wasathiyah*, which is a balanced attitude that is not extreme left or extreme right, where it has the characteristics of a comprehensive understanding of issues, a balance between the provisions of shariat and changing times, respect for human culture, recognizing plurality and recognizing minority rights.

3.2 Definition, Limitations and Characteristics of Religious Moderation

In 2019, the Indonesian Ministry of Religion actively promoted religious moderation. The Indonesian Ministry of Religion designated 2019 as a year of *religious moderation*. (Barburaadli & Ihsan, 2022). This is based on experiences, violations and hate speech in the past that fractured relations between religious communities are a problem faced by the Indonesian nation today. For this reason, the principle of religious moderation need to be a shield.

The success of Religious Moderation in life can be seen from the following four harmonies and interconnected indicators: a) National commitment, especially on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, in tolerance towards differences in religion, race, ethnicity and culture; b) Non-violence, both verbal, physical and mental violence; and c) Accommodating to local culture as long as it does not conflict with basic religious teachings. (TIM Pemyusan Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Apart from that, religious moderation also maintains unity and integrity between religious communities, respecting each other and helping each other. In accordance with this motto is *tolerance, harmony, the solidness of faith and unity*. Because Indonesia is a country that has many tribes, religions, and races. Thus, the attitude of religious moderation is in accordance with the ideology of the Indonesian state, which is reflected in *tolerance, harmony* life's motto. There are elements of tolerance, accommodative attitude, anti-violence and mutual cooperation.

Limitations on religious understanding and practice can be considered excessive if they violate three things: a) Human values, for example committing acts that degrade human dignity or even eliminating the existence of humanity itself but he said to violate human values. The actions were clearly excessive or extreme. In Mutual agreement, for example, in social life, there are certainly many regulations that have been mutually agreed upon by all residents in a neighborhood where they live, if a resident in the name of the religion he adheres to violates the agreed agreement then he can be considered excessive; c) Public order, if someone in the name of religious teachings violates public order, they can be considered excessively religious. (Aminul Arwan, 2020).

Drawing on what the essence of religious moderation is in nature *wasathiyah*, it is necessary to limit how to behave between different beliefs with faith that do not default or are in accordance with religious teachings. Among the verses regarding the limits of tolerance are as follows: a) Not Risking Faith: *Surat Al-Kahf* orders a Muslim to restrain himself from other religions related to *shirkah* and *polytheism*. So, the correct concept of tolerance is to allow other people to practice their religion without hindering them, not by following them. b) Not Spreading Hate each other: *Alah SWT* forbids his servants from spreading hatred between people of different beliefs. As *Alah SWT* says in *Q. Al-Baqarah* 11, (Shiddiq, 2017). This verse also provides restrictions on, more precisely, prohibitions or orders not to make fun of each other, especially people of different religions, which will give rise to conflict. (Shiddiq, 2017). c) Not Forcing Other Religious Groups: *Al Quran* *surah Al-Baqarah* 256 explains that *there is no compulsion in religion*. (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2014). In striving to goodness should be done in a polite way, there is no compulsion for people to follow what is conveyed. When a da'wah has reached him then after that he has the right to choose. From this description, it can be seen that in the *Qur'an* there are 3 restrictions that a person should not do including not risking bloodlines, not spreading hatred towards others, and not forcing other religious groups.

The understanding and practice of religious practice of a moderate Muslim has the following characteristics: *Tamam* (take the middle path, Tamam (balanced) both earthly and spiritual, *Lad* (straight and firm) namely putting something in its place, *Tamam* (element), namely recognizing and respecting differences, *Mamam* (gatherer), *Qam* (deliberation), *Wah* (refusing) adhering to principles as a moderate understanding of sharia attitudes is at stake at what preserving old traditions that are relevant and implementing new things that are more relevant, it doesn't mean leaving behind, *Tamam* (dynamic and innovation), *Tamam* (pastness), (Ali & Laila, 2015). Therefore, above shows that there are 10 characteristics, what have religious moderation attitude there are: *Tamam*, *Tamam*, *Qam*, *Wah*, *Tamam*, *Tamam*, *Tamam*, *Tamam*, *Tamam*, *Tamam*, *Tamam*, and *Tamam*.

3.3 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Religious Moderation and Efforts to Strengthen It

3.3.1 Supporting Factors

Several supporting factors. First, *Coordination*. Coordination is carried out by strengthening cooperation by determining goals, recognizing each individual's character, diligently communicating between people, determining roles and constructing realizations. Second, *Leadership* and *Humanistic support*. Leadership can influence the development of society in a reciprocal relationship. Have a leadership figure is needed who creates an attitude of moderation in society.

The existence of the educational *learning* is a lesson that is considered effective is *Islamic* in *Islamic* moderation. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the curriculum is needed to support the implementation of strengthening religious moderation in the *formal* educational institutions. Learning about religious moderation in non-formal institutions such as TPA and other religious *social* institutions needs to prioritize religious moderation education by implementing Islamic values from an early age (Ali & Firmansyah, 2021). Both formal and informal.

One of the efforts to *create* an attitude of moderation in Indonesian society is through education. The Indonesian Ministry of Religion is making efforts to strengthen religious moderation in a project to strengthen the profile of *Islamic* students. Based on KMA 547 of 2022, strengthening the profile of *Islamic* students is the main goal of the movement to prepare to live in society, namely the profile of *Islamic* students and the profile of students of *Islamic* (students of *Islamic*). The guideline prepared by the independent institution *Islamic* (Islamic) level provides basic presents several strategies for strengthening the profile. First, Profile strengthening efforts are integrated with lesson substance. Second, designed collaboratively between subjects. Third, carried out in an integrated manner in developing talents and interests.

To strengthen religious moderation, it is necessary to strengthen the profile of *Islamic* students and *Islamic*. It shows students through a curriculum that is integrated into the *core* of education. Based on his description, various factors influence the implementation of strengthening religious moderation. In terms of supporting factors, among them are the cooperation and communication built by stakeholders and the support of leaders or bureaucracy.

3.3.2 Inhibiting Factors

Meanwhile, factors inhibiting religious moderation efforts include. First, Lack of *budget*. If there is a good budget, the community will feel the positive impact by living in peace. (Indarwati, Sofron, & Ardhana JM, 2022). Second, lack of socialization insight into religious moderation. Third, unresponsive educational institutions. The explanation shows that the inhibiting factors that exist in strengthening religious moderation are the lack of budget to socialize the strengthening of religious moderation, the lack of socialization of religious moderation strengthening programs and the lack of implementation of educational socialization of norms, hampering the planned religious moderation strengthening program.

3.4 Understanding and Awareness of Religious Plurality Of Students MAN 4 Aceh Besar

Muhammad Aliyah Nigori (MAN 4 Aceh Besar) has 47 teachers and staff and a student population of 880 for the 2022/23 academic year. There has been an increasing awareness of religious moderation. The results of the research conducted by the researcher provide an overview of the students' understanding and awareness of religious moderation at MAN 4 Aceh Besar, presented through the results of an attitude scale test in the form of a Likert scale (Documentation, n.d.).

Based on the data calculations, it was concluded that the students at MAN 4 Aceh Besar, from a 10% sample taken for all 495 items, achieved an average score of 80.8%. This percentage is within a 'Good' category. It shows that students were able to answer questions related to understanding and awareness of religious moderation. Additionally, the students' understanding of religious moderation has led to the emergence of two generations of national religious moderation ambassadors (Jomali, 2023). This demonstrates that efforts to enhance religious moderation in the Madrasah have yielded positive results.

This data shows that the efforts of the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs as well as by Darussalam and UIN, have been implemented by Madrasah, so that students reflect the characteristics of religious moderation as stated by Yusuf Qardhawi, namely having a comprehensive understanding of Islam, a balance between the provisions of shari'ah and changing times, respecting human values, respecting *ghibah* and integrity of society, religion.

This success certainly needs to be continued by other educational institutions. It is also important to be socialized in various other educational institutions, so that the spirit of strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia can be more evenly distributed.

3.5 Religious Moderation Strengthening Program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar

Based on an interview with Mr. Muhammad Iqbal, a teacher of *Wahdah Al-Falah*, regarding the religious moderation strengthening program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar, the program has encompassed various efforts as follows: a) Curriculum that Encourages Religious Moderation: Developing a curriculum that promotes better understanding of religion, tolerance values, and appreciation for diversity. b) Teacher Training: Providing training to teachers so that they can teach and facilitate discussions that support religious moderation. c) Extracurricular Activities: Organizing extracurricular activities such as discussion groups, seminars, or workshops that explore issues of religious moderation. Additionally, involving students in national activities such as religious moderation ambassadors. d) Character Education Program: Encouraging the development of traits like empathy, tolerance, and interfaith understanding through character education programs. e) Educational Resources: Providing books, teaching materials, and other resources that promote religious moderation. f) Evaluation and Monitoring: Conducting continuous evaluation to ensure that these programs are effective and aligned with the goals of religious moderation (Muhammad Putra, 2023).

Based on the observations, it found out that religious moderation materials are included in extracurricular activities such as learning. In these learning activities, students are guided to have a moderate understanding and attitude towards religion. This attitude is instilled even during the immediate period for new students, integrated through learning activities. From the vision and mission perspective, the orientation is also towards moderation, as seen in the motto and Core Values of MAN 4 Aceh Besar, which is "BIBAHAS" an acronym for "Digitized, Modern, and Competitive" with a focus on moderation.

From a learning perspective, the *Asyiah Al-Madani* teacher plays a significant role because the subject of religious moderation is included in this course. However, other teachers also have a responsibility to incorporate religious moderation values into every lesson delivered through certain teaching methods or approaches (Muhammad Putra, 2023).

Meanwhile, stakeholders outside the Madrasah also contribute to the preparation process for national religious moderation ambassadors. For example, there is support when MAN 4 Aceh Besar

students become national religious moderation ambassadors, with financial support from various parties such as the committee, the regional office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, although with varying amounts. Sending religious moderation ambassadors from the School certainly plays an important role in increasing the spirit of strengthening religious moderation in Madrasah, because their presence will be able to be an example for other students, besides that the school ambassadors can also conduct socialization to various school institutions to campaign for various important information about religious moderation.

The optimization of religious moderation is also pursued by enhancing teacher quality. Interviews with teachers revealed that education and staff from the madrasah were sent to the Provincial Religious Training Center in Aceh to receive specialized training on religious moderation. Some teachers successfully completed these programs and were awarded certificates for their competency. Nationally, they also participated in religious moderation competency programs to further strengthen their understanding and implementation skills (Jemil, 2023). Research indicates that individuals practicing moderate and inclusive teachings are more likely to exhibit tolerance (Hafizah, Wafid, & Fauziddi, 2022).

The various training programs for strengthening religious moderation have proven to be highly impactful. Continuous professional development is deemed essential for teachers and staff to remain effective in delivering the program's objectives.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the quality of teachers, particularly in their understanding of religious moderation, is a pivotal factor. Accurate information and proper guidance from teachers are necessary to ensure the program's success. Teacher readiness and commitment are critical, as resistance from educators could hinder the program's implementation and effectiveness. Strengthening teacher quality ensures a solid foundation for fostering religious moderation among students.

Efforts to strengthen religious moderation at MAN 4 Aceh Besar certainly should be an example to other schools. For this reason, madrasah needs to provide sustainability of the programs that have been carried out by involving government support, so that the outcomes of the practice of implementing strategies to strengthen religious moderation that has been carried out can be applied more widely in various other educational institutions. In addition, these efforts will also be able to counter negative issues in the form of violence and hatred in various educational institutions which are certainly the enemies of religious moderation itself. In the national context, of course, the programs that have been implemented are considered appropriate to overcome national issues that are developing in Indonesia, especially the issue of radicalism. These efforts can certainly counter the development of radicalism and intolerance thought that develop.

The effort certainly does not stop at this research. Of course, the results of this study need to be carried out further by subsequent researchers to strengthen sustainability and get new strategies on strengthening other religious moderation in madrasah and elsewhere in general. As well as finding other strategies to counter various factors that can weaken efforts to strengthen religious moderation in Madrasah.

4.8 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of the Religious Moderation Strengthening Program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar

The sustainability of the program of the religious moderation program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar is supported by several key factors. One crucial factor is stakeholder support, evident in the provision of financial assistance for selected moderation ambassadors. This backing plays a vital role in facilitating various activities and strengthening programs, including socialization efforts aimed at promoting religious moderation within the madrasah. Such support underscores the commitment of stakeholders to fostering a culture of moderation.

Another significant factor is the alignment of the institution's vision with religious moderation. MAN 4 Aceh Besar's motto, "BERMUTU, BERMAKHLAK, BERKOMPETENSI – DIGNIFIED,

Moderate, and Competitive), reflects its emphasis on moderation as a core principle. This vision serves as a guiding framework for organizing activities that reinforce the values of moderation, ensuring that these principles are consistently integrated into the institution's programs.

Efforts to improve teacher quality also contribute substantially to the program's realization. Teachers are trained in key domains of religious moderation within the Islamic school, with the government demonstrating its commitment by funding these initiatives. Such training ensures that educators are equipped to model and instill values of tolerance and moderation in their students. According to Albert Bandura's learning theory, students learn behavior through observation and imitation. Teachers who exemplify religious tolerance provide a powerful model for students, enabling them to internalize and emulate these values in their actions (Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2022). This comprehensive approach underscores the institution's dedication to creating an environment that promotes understanding, respect, and moderation.

3.8.2. Inhibiting Factors of the Religious Moderation Strengthening Program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar

In addition to supporting factors, there are several challenges inhibiting the strengthening of the religious moderation program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar. One significant challenge is the influence of social media, which exposes students to radical sermons and content (Mastariyah Putra, 2023). Such material can lead students away from moderation, fostering behaviors that undermine the program's objectives. Radical content may even prompt learners to imitate violent behavior, rendering the religious strengthening efforts ineffective. To counter this, proactive measures are necessary, such as training teachers in religious moderation, displaying banners promoting tolerance and tolerance against intolerance, and creating educational platforms that emphasize the value of tolerance within the school environment.

Another critical issue is the lack of understanding among some teachers. Internally, some teachers have been influenced by misinformation outside the school, leading them to discourage students from participating in religious moderation activities. Efforts to address this involve providing these teachers with accurate information and a deeper understanding of religious moderation, emphasizing principles that promote harmony rather than hatred.

Externally, institutions affiliated with deviant ideologies pose additional challenges. These organizations sometimes engage directly with schools to propagate their views. However, the school actively counters such influence by presenting arguments aligned with its moderation principles (Jusuf, 2023). Addressing these internal and external challenges requires gradual, in-depth socialization and consistent communication among all stakeholders to strengthen the program's foundation (Zuhron, 2022).

Based on the collected data, the religious moderation strengthening program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar includes the following:

a. Understanding and Awareness of Religious Moderation among Students of MAN 4 Aceh Besar

The data obtained shows that the understanding and awareness of religious moderation among students at MAN 4 Aceh Besar are in the "good" category. This is based on the questionnaire the students completed, which concerns indicators of sound religious understanding, including rational commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and acceptance of traditions. Through instilling the values of religious moderation by the school, students can understand and apply these four indicators.

b. Religious Moderation Strengthening Program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar

The school has undertaken efforts to strengthen religious moderation. In terms of vision and mission, it leans towards moderation, as seen from the motto and Core Values of MAN 4 Aceh Besar, "BERKUALITAS, BERAKSIKSI, BERKEMAMUHAN" (Berkualitas, Berakhlak, Moderat dan Kompetitif) where one of the focuses is on moderation. Teachers play a crucial role in strengthening and instilling the values of religious

moderation in students, where these values can be integrated into all school activities, not just in classroom learning.

In addition, strengthening the attitude of religious moderation among students is also supported by teachers' understanding of religious moderation, which can foster students' attitudes of moderation. The provision of moderate-based learning materials can enhance students' understanding of religious moderation concepts. Providing good examples will instill religious moderation attitudes in students. Teachers' efforts to model moderate attitudes in students help them navigate issues that could lead to division. (Zakaria, 2021). Furthermore, the strengthening of religious moderation through family and community support will certainly further support the maturation of these attitudes. Moderate education provided by parents and the community will create a generation with good character, justice, non-extremism, and impartiality, except in matters that are correct according to Islamic law. (Nisa, 2023)

c. Supporting and inhibiting factors of the religious moderation strengthening program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar

In every effort, there must be **supporting** factors and **obstacles** may arise. This is also the case in the religious moderation study learning program at MAN 4 Aceh Besar. From observations and interviews, the supporting factors found include the efforts carried out by the school and the cooperation and support from **religious** authorities, which ensure the continuity of this program. The obstacles found by the school include the **time** needed by the religious moderation program to be well received and socialized to all parties and to apply moderate attitudes within each individual. The success of this program relies on the responsibility of all parties, and it is hoped that the challenges faced can be overcome so that the religious moderation program can be effectively implemented. Religious moderation is crucial for resolving problems, as it can sustain tolerance among students (Maharani & Ridwanita, 2022). Increasing religious tolerance certainly plays a role in preventing violations, as has happened. The SETARA Institute report reported that in 2016, there were 267 violations of freedom of religion in 265 events, and 68% stated that they refused to build houses of worship. Therefore, religious strengthening programs need to be strengthened, this is also necessary to help **local** education programs, which are often situated in tension-conflict areas (Ghani, 2022). In addition, it also helps **religious** education programs, such as Islamic education figures that are needed to strengthen religious tolerance. (Manshuri, Jolani, Datusoleh, Restia, & Thahir, 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that students at MAN 4 Aceh Besar demonstrate strong understanding and awareness of religious moderation, attributed to the well-implemented strengthening program. The program is supported by the madrasah's vision and mission, such as the **"BIMASATIB"** motto emphasizing moderation, and is operationalized through integrated curricula, extracurricular activities, and stakeholder support, including financial resources for moderation **incentives**. Efforts to enhance teachers' understanding through training also contribute significantly to the program's **success**. These findings imply that the madrasah's approach to fostering religious moderation serves as a **model** for other educational institutions, highlighting the importance of institutional vision, comprehensive programming, and stakeholder involvement.

However, challenges persist, including the influence of radical content in social media, limited understanding among some teachers, internal resistance, and external threats from **deviant** ideologies. Addressing these obstacles requires targeted measures, such as collaborating with the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications to filter harmful content, organizing training to correct misconceptions about religious moderation, and providing students with programs that enhance tolerance and **inclusivity**.

This study is limited to the context of MAN 4 Aceh Besar and does not encompass other madrasah or educational institutions, suggesting the need for further research to generalize findings. Future research should focus on developing scalable models for religious moderation programs, addressing challenges like media influence and teacher resistance, and exploring their applicability in diverse educational settings. These efforts are essential for strengthening religious moderation across Indonesia's educational landscape, ensuring its alignment with national and provincial goals for fostering harmony and **modernity**.

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Article Error You may need to remove this article.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word. Consider using the article **the**.



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.



Confused You have used **Peace** in this sentence. You may need to use **piece** instead.



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.



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P/V You have used the passive voice in this sentence. Depending upon what you wish to emphasize in the sentence, you may want to revise it using the active voice.



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PAGE 11



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PAGE 12

PAGE 13
