

Constructing Religious Moderation in a Primary School: A Case Study of SDN Jambean 1 Kediri

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Abstract. This study explores how religious moderation is constructed and practiced at SDN Jambean 1 Kediri, East Java, an inclusive primary school with students from diverse religious and learning backgrounds. Although studies on religious moderation in Indonesia have increased, its implementation in inclusive primary schools remains less explored, particularly in relation to students' everyday experiences. Drawing on Berger's Social Construction of Reality, this study examines how religious moderation develops through externalization, objectivation, and internalization. A qualitative case study was conducted through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving the school principal, teachers, religious education teachers, and students. The findings show that religious moderation was expressed through inclusive learning, teacher role modelling, the 5S culture (senyum, salam, sapa, sopan, and santun), equal participation, shared social and religious activities, and the Religious Moderation Corner. These practices gave students opportunities to interact and participate with peers from different religious backgrounds while respecting their beliefs. Over time, such experiences became part of the school culture and were reflected in students' respectful and cooperative behaviour. The findings suggest that religious moderation was not only taught as a value, but also experienced and practiced in everyday school life. This study highlights the role of inclusive primary schools in nurturing religious moderation through meaningful social interactions and shared experiences.

Keywords: *Religious moderation; primary schools; tolerance; character education; SDN Jambean 1*

INTRODUCTION

Religious diversity is a defining characteristic of Indonesian society and presents both opportunities and challenges for education. In a pluralistic context, schools have a strategic role in developing students' capacity to live peacefully amid differences in religion, culture, ethnicity, and social background. Religious moderation is therefore increasingly relevant to educational development because it encourages individuals to maintain their religious commitment while respecting diversity, rejecting violence, and promoting harmonious social relations [1]. These values need to be nurtured from an early age through educational environments that help students develop respectful attitudes and positive ways of interacting with others. Schools are expected not only to develop students' academic competencies but also to cultivate values that support peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and social responsibility. This effort is particularly important during the early stages of students' development, as this period plays a critical role in shaping their identity, attitudes, and patterns of social interaction [2].

At the same time, inclusive education offers a meaningful space for putting the values of religious moderation into practice. By bringing together students with different abilities, learning needs, socioeconomic backgrounds, and religious affiliations, inclusive schools create opportunities for students to interact and learn from one another. These everyday interactions allow students to encounter differences directly and gradually develop the ability to understand, accept, and appreciate others [3]. In this sense, inclusion is not only about ensuring that every student has access to education, but also about creating a learning environment where differences are experienced as part of everyday life. Such experiences can nurture tolerance and critical thinking as students learn to listen to different perspectives, respond respectfully, and engage positively with diversity. In elementary education, the integration of religious moderation through learning, curriculum, and the school environment can further support students' tolerance and harmonious relationships across religious differences [4].

Inclusive schools provide a distinctive context for understanding religious moderation as a lived practice within everyday educational life. Rather than being confined to formal instruction, the values of moderation can be cultivated through classroom interactions, teacher modelling, school culture, and routine activities that shape how students respond to differences [5], [6]. In this context, everyday educational practices can create opportunities for students to experience respect, openness, and peaceful engagement as part of their daily relationships [7]. Such experiences are particularly meaningful in primary education, where students are developing social attitudes and learning how to navigate diversity in their immediate

environment [8]. Examining these everyday processes therefore offers a valuable perspective on how religious moderation is constructed, practiced, and gradually incorporated into students' ways of interacting with others. This perspective becomes particularly relevant in schools that consciously integrate inclusive educational practices with programs and cultures aimed at fostering religious moderation.

SDN Jambean 1 Kediri, East Java, represents a particularly relevant case for exploring this issue. As a public inclusive school, it accommodates students from different religious backgrounds as well as students with special educational needs. The school also promotes character-building programs that encourage positive social interactions, mutual respect, and appreciation of diversity. Its recognition as a Religious Moderation School (Sekolah Moderasi Beragama) in 2024 further reflects the school's commitment to fostering these values through its educational practices and school culture. This combination of inclusive education and religious moderation makes SDN Jambean 1 a meaningful setting for examining how moderation values are nurtured and experienced in everyday school life. Moreover, the increasing exposure of young learners to divisive narratives and intolerance through digital media highlights the importance of identifying educational approaches that can strengthen inclusive and moderate attitudes from an early age.

Although previous studies have explored religious moderation in primary schools, less attention has been given to how these values grow through students' everyday experiences and interactions, particularly in inclusive school settings. This study responds to this gap by viewing religious moderation not simply as a value taught through formal instruction, but as a process that develops through classroom practices, teacher modelling, school culture, and daily relationships among students. Drawing on Berger's Social Construction of Reality, this study offers a social-construction perspective on how religious moderation develops through externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Accordingly, this study aims to explore how religious moderation is constructed and practiced at SDN Jambean 1 Kediri, East Java, and how this process is reflected in students' everyday attitudes and behaviours.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore how the religious moderation model is implemented in an inclusive school. This approach was considered appropriate because it enabled an in-depth understanding of educational practices, participants' experiences, and social interactions within their natural setting [9], [10]. The study was conducted at SDN Jambean 1 Kediri, East Java, a primary school that accommodates students from diverse religious backgrounds and students with special educational needs. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in implementing inclusive education and religious moderation, including the school principal, classroom teachers, religious education teachers, and students from different religious backgrounds [11]. The selection of participants was intended to capture perspectives from different members of the school community who were directly involved in learning activities, inclusive practices, and the development of religious moderation within the school environment.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews explored participants' experiences and perspectives, while observations focused on learning activities, student interactions, and school culture related to religious moderation. School policies, lesson plans, and activity documents were also examined to support the findings. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, supported by interview guides, observation sheets, and document review forms. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing [12]. Data from interviews, observations, and documents were compared and interpreted systematically to identify recurring patterns related to the implementation of religious moderation. To ensure the credibility of the findings, source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking were employed throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The findings indicate that the implementation of religious moderation at SDN Jambean 1 Kediri began with the externalization of moderation values through inclusive educational practices and everyday interactions. The school sought to accommodate students with diverse learning needs without treating differences as a basis for exclusion, while providing additional support when needed. In classroom learning, teachers deliberately fostered respect, cooperation, equality, and appreciation for diversity by placing students from different religious backgrounds together in discussions and group activities. These values were also nurtured through the school's everyday 5S culture—*senyum, salam, sapa, sopan, and santun*—which encouraged students to interact with one another in a respectful and welcoming manner. Beyond classroom instruction, teachers modelled these values through fair treatment and inclusive

participation in school activities, including social and religious programs. Even when activities were rooted in a particular religious tradition, students from different religious backgrounds were given space to participate in ways that respected their respective beliefs. In this way, religious moderation was introduced not simply as a set of values to be taught, but through everyday experiences in which students learned to interact, participate, and live together amid differences.

Beyond classroom learning, the school strengthened these efforts through various character-building initiatives and school-based activities that allowed students to experience religious and social values through everyday interactions. One such initiative was the Religious Moderation Corner, which provided a space for students to learn about diversity, develop tolerance, and build peaceful relationships with others. These values were also reflected in religious and social activities, including the “*Ramadhan Berbagi Takjil Gratis*” program, in which members of the school community from different religious backgrounds participated together. Students from non-Muslim backgrounds were also included in the distribution, while similar patterns of participation were observed during major school events such as *Mawlid al-Nabi* and *Isra’ Mi’raj*. During these celebrations, students brought their own meals and shared the same space to eat and interact, with non-Muslim students joining their peers without distinctions based on religious background. Charitable activities, such as assistance for orphans, likewise provided opportunities for students from different backgrounds to participate and interact together. These everyday experiences created meaningful spaces for students to encounter differences naturally and develop respectful relationships, while teachers and school programs provided continued support for living together in harmony. The photographic documentation in Figure 1 further illustrates this practice through the students’ participation in the “*Ramadhan Berbagi Takjil Gratis*” activity.



Figure 1. Ramadhan Berbagi Takjil Activity at SDN Jambean 1 Kediri

These practices were not limited to individual activities but gradually became embedded in the broader culture of the school. The findings further reveal that the values of religious moderation became objectified

through the school's inclusive culture and everyday social interactions. Over time, respect for diversity was no longer confined to classroom instruction or particular school programs but evolved into a shared norm that guided relationships across the school community. Students demonstrated mutual respect during classroom activities and school programs, while teachers consistently fostered open communication, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving. Supported by inclusive school policies and daily routines, these values were continuously reinforced, allowing students to experience religious moderation as a lived social practice rather than merely an abstract concept.

The Religious Moderation Corner further contributed to this process by providing a shared space where students could interact, exchange ideas about diversity, and deepen their understanding of one another. Through these regular interactions, the values of tolerance, respect, and peaceful coexistence became increasingly embedded in the daily life of the school. Consequently, religious moderation developed into a collective culture that was jointly constructed and sustained by teachers and students within an inclusive educational environment.

A similar pattern of inclusive social interaction was also evident in school-based Islamic activities, such as the celebrations of Mawlid al-Nabi and Isra' Mi'raj. During these activities, students were encouraged to bring their own meals, and students from non-Muslim backgrounds also participated by bringing and sharing their meals with their peers. They gathered, ate, and interacted together without distinctions based on religious background, creating a warm atmosphere of togetherness and mutual respect. These simple yet meaningful interactions reflected the teachers' efforts to model inclusive attitudes in students' everyday lives, supported by school programs that provided space for children to experience diversity in a natural and positive way. Rather than learning tolerance only as a formal value, students encountered it through shared experiences of living and interacting with one another. This shared atmosphere of togetherness can be seen in the photographic documentation in Figure 2, which captures students from across the school community participating together in the Mawlid al-Nabi celebration.



Figure 2. Students Participating Together in the Mawlid al-Nabi Celebration at SDN Jamban 1 Kediri

The practices illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 were part of a broader pattern of inclusive interactions within the school. Across classroom learning, daily routines, school activities, and social programs,

students were given repeated opportunities to interact, participate, and learn with peers from different backgrounds. These practices provided concrete experiences through which respect, tolerance, equality, and peaceful coexistence could be encountered in everyday school life. The main practices identified from the findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Religious Moderation Practices at SDN Jambean 1 Kediri

Practice	Findings
Inclusive learning	Students from different religious backgrounds and learning needs learned together in discussions and group activities.
5S culture	Senyum, salam, sapa, sopan, and santun were practiced in students' daily interactions.
Teacher role modelling	Teachers showed fairness, empathy, and respect in teaching and interacting with students.
Inclusive participation	Students from different religious backgrounds participated in school activities while respecting their respective beliefs.
Shared activities	Students interacted and shared meals during Mawlid al-Nabi and Isra' Mi'raj, including non-Muslim students.
Religious Moderation Corner	Students used a shared space to learn about diversity and interact with one another.
Social care	Students from different backgrounds participated together in activities such as assistance for orphans.

Table 1 illustrates how religious moderation was woven into different aspects of students' everyday school experiences. The practices ranged from learning and daily interactions to teacher modelling, shared activities, and social programs. Through these experiences, students were given regular opportunities to meet, work with, and learn alongside peers from different backgrounds. The findings also show that respect and acceptance were expressed through simple and familiar practices, such as the 5S culture, shared participation, and caring for others. Over time, these experiences were reflected in students' willingness to cooperate, interact respectfully, and accept differences in their daily relationships. Religious moderation thus emerged as part of the way students experienced and lived together at school, rather than as a value encountered only through formal instruction.

Discussion

Constructing Religious Moderation through Externalization

The findings indicate that the construction of religious moderation at SDN Jambean 1 Kediri begins with the active role of teachers in translating moderation values into everyday educational practices. Religious moderation was shaped not only through what teachers taught but also through how they responded to differences in everyday school life. This finding extends Muslih et al., who identified challenges in translating teachers' understanding of religious moderation into educational practice [13]. At SDN Jambean 1, however, moderation was enacted through fairness, cooperation, and respect for differences rather than through the explicit transmission of concepts alone. This resonates with Suparno et al., who emphasize habituation, character formation, and teacher involvement in developing moderation [14], and with Setiawan et al., who highlight the internalization of tolerance and respect within the school environment [6]. Viewed through Berger's perspective, these practices represent externalization, as moderation values were expressed through concrete social actions and interactions within the school environment. Thus, religious moderation was not merely communicated as a normative value but experienced by students through everyday practices, suggesting that moderation is first encountered as a lived social experience and can subsequently become embedded in students' attitudes and behaviour.

The externalization of moderation values was particularly visible in classroom interactions and collaborative learning. Teachers deliberately brought students from different religious backgrounds and learning abilities into shared discussions and group activities, while encouraging respectful communication, cooperation, and equal participation. The everyday 5S culture—senyum, salam, sapa, sopan, and santun—provided a simple but consistent way of expressing respect in students' daily interactions. Rather than separating religious moderation from classroom life, these practices integrated moderation into routine educational experiences. Teachers therefore functioned not merely as transmitters of concepts but as agents who translated moderation values into observable social practices. This finding complements Muslih et al., who found that teachers in primary education introduced religious moderation through approaches adapted to their respective school contexts, although they also encountered challenges in conveying moderation messages effectively [13]. It also resonates with Sulistyowati et al., who found that moderation values in a religiously diverse elementary school were cultivated through classroom learning and the habituation of the 5S culture, particularly in fostering musawah (equality) [15]. In the context of SDN Jambean 1, these practices show how moderation was expressed through everyday educational interactions, allowing abstract values to take concrete form in students' relationships with others.

Externalization also occurred through school activities that created opportunities for students to practice respectful relationships across religious differences. The Religious Moderation Corner, the “Ramadhan Berbagi Takjil Gratis” activity, and participation in Mawlid al-Nabi and Isra’ Mi’raj provided concrete settings for students to encounter diversity through shared experiences. Students from different religious backgrounds were given opportunities to participate without abandoning their respective religious identities. During Mawlid al-Nabi and Isra’ Mi’raj, for example, students shared meals and interacted together, while non-Muslim students participated in the social dimension of the activities. This finding is consistent with Faridah et al., who found that religious and extracurricular activities involving students from different religious backgrounds can foster tolerance, mutual respect, cooperation, and interfaith harmony among elementary school students [16]. It also resonates with Mufi et al., who explain that the cultivation of religious moderation in schools can take place through both formal and hidden curricula, allowing moderation values to be introduced and practiced within the educational environment [17]. At SDN Jambean 1, these school activities provided concrete spaces for expressing moderation through participation, interaction, and cooperation across religious differences.

Taken together, these findings suggest that externalization at SDN Jambean 1 involved a shift from religious moderation as an abstract educational principle to moderation as an enacted social practice. The significance of this process lies not in the number of programs implemented, but in how moderation values were given concrete expression through everyday relationships, participation, and responses to difference. This pattern is consistent with research showing that school culture can foster religious moderation through curriculum, daily interactions, and activities beyond classroom instruction, particularly when teachers model respectful behaviour and schools provide opportunities for interfaith cooperation [18]. Similarly, research in elementary education has shown that routine practices can strengthen the implementation of moderation values and foster students’ tolerance and appreciation of differences [19]. From Berger’s perspective, such externalized actions constitute the initial movement through which meanings are expressed and produced within social reality. Thus, the practices at SDN Jambean 1 represent an initial stage in the social construction of religious moderation, creating the basis for these values to move from individual actions toward a more stable reality within the school community.

School Culture as the Objectivation of Religious Moderation

The findings indicate that religious moderation at SDN Jambean 1 gradually became embedded in the school’s everyday culture through repeated inclusive practices and social interactions. Practices introduced through classroom learning were extended through school routines, collaborative activities, and equal participation among students from different religious and learning backgrounds. The Religious Moderation Corner also provided a shared space for students to engage with diversity and develop peaceful relationships. This pattern is consistent with research showing that school culture can strengthen religious moderation through formal and non-formal activities that foster *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, *tawasuth*, peace, and harmony [20]. It also resonates with findings that moderation values integrated into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities through habituation can strengthen students’ tolerance, respect for differences, and commitment to unity [8]. Research in elementary education further indicates that implementing moderation values in everyday school life contributes to positive student character [21]. From Berger’s perspective, this process represents objectivation, whereby meanings produced through repeated interactions acquire stability and become experienced as social reality. Thus, religious moderation at SDN Jambean 1 increasingly took form as a shared cultural pattern within the school community.

The objectivation of religious moderation at SDN Jambean 1 can also be seen in the consistency of these values across everyday school practices. The 5S culture, inclusive group work, equal opportunities to participate, and the Religious Moderation Corner were not isolated initiatives but part of students’ recurring experiences at school. Teachers and school leaders also reinforced these practices by responding to differences through respect, dialogue, and fair treatment. This finding is consistent with research showing that character values can be embedded continuously through instructional planning, collaborative learning, role modelling, and co-curricular activities [22]. Through such repetition, values initially expressed through particular actions gradually became familiar patterns of interaction. In this sense, moderation began to acquire a stable presence in school life, as students encountered similar expectations of respect, cooperation, and inclusion across different situations.

This process was particularly evident in the way students were encouraged to live with religious differences without treating them as barriers to social interaction. Muslim and non-Muslim students could participate in shared activities, cooperate in learning, and engage in social programs while maintaining their respective religious identities. These experiences helped establish an understanding that religious difference was a normal part of school life rather than something that required separation. This finding is consistent with research showing that tolerance in elementary education can be developed by encouraging students to respect differences, including differing opinions, while religious and school activities provide opportunities

to strengthen tolerant attitudes [23]. It also resonates with research using Berger's social construction perspective, which shows that tolerance-oriented practices can become objectified as shared rituals and social symbols through social interaction [24]. From Berger's perspective, this reflects objectivation, because meanings created through repeated social interaction gradually become experienced as an established reality. At SDN Jamban 1, therefore, religious moderation was increasingly reflected not only in what teachers intended to teach but also in the social environment that students experienced as normal, familiar, and shared.

At this stage, religious moderation at SDN Jamban 1 had begun to move beyond individual initiatives and acquire a shared meaning within school life. The repeated experience of 5S, inclusive learning, equal participation, and interaction across religious differences made tolerance and respect increasingly familiar to students. This finding is in line with research emphasizing the importance of teacher guidance, extracurricular activities, and an inclusive school environment in cultivating tolerance and inclusivity from an early age [25]. It also responds to the concern that moderation may remain normative when it is not translated into contextual educational practices [26]. From Berger's perspective, this marks objectivation, as practices initially produced through human interaction gradually acquire stability and become recognized as a normal and shared way of living together. At SDN Jamban 1, therefore, moderation was increasingly experienced not merely as a value taught by teachers but as part of the social reality of everyday school life.

Internalization of Religious Moderation in Students' Daily Behaviour

The findings at SDN Jamban 1 suggest that internalization emerged as a continuation of the processes described above: values that teachers had externalized through inclusive practices and that had become objectivated through school culture gradually began to shape students' attitudes and everyday behaviour. This was reflected in students' willingness to interact across religious differences, cooperate in learning, participate in shared social activities, and respond to peers with respect and acceptance. This finding is consistent with research showing that the internalization of religious moderation values in elementary education can contribute to the formation of tolerant personalities and fair and balanced student character [27]. The significance of this stage lies in the movement of moderation from what the school practiced and normalized to how students themselves responded to others. From Berger's perspective, internalization occurs when an established social reality is absorbed into individual consciousness and becomes a meaningful basis for action. Thus, at SDN Jamban 1, religious moderation was not only present as a school expectation but increasingly appeared in students' ordinary ways of relating to others.

The students' everyday interactions provide a clearer indication that moderation had begun to move from the school environment into individual ways of responding to difference. Respectful communication, willingness to cooperate, participation in shared activities, and acceptance of peers from different religious backgrounds suggest that students were not merely following externally imposed expectations. Rather, these practices show that the meanings repeatedly encountered through classroom interaction, the 5S culture, and inclusive school activities had begun to guide their own responses. This finding is consistent with research showing that the internalization of Islamic moderation can develop progressively from cognitive understanding and affective cultivation toward behavioral habituation through collaborative peer interaction [28]. It is also supported by research demonstrating that moderation values can become visible in students' behaviour through teacher modelling, habituation, cooperation, and social experiences within a multicultural school context [29]. However, the findings at SDN Jamban 1 indicate that internalization should not be understood simply as the successful transfer of values from teachers to students. The students' behaviour suggests a more gradual process in which social experiences become personally meaningful and are expressed in ordinary relationships.

The internalization of moderation values was strengthened through repeated interactions and inclusive participation across different aspects of school life. Practices such as placing students from different religious backgrounds in collaborative learning activities, maintaining the 5S culture, and providing equal opportunities to participate in school programs allowed moderation values to be encountered repeatedly rather than as isolated messages. This finding resonates with Musfiroh et al., who found that religious moderation among young children was manifested through habituation, curriculum-based activities, daily interactions, and practices that fostered tolerance, respect, and equal opportunities [30]. It also corresponds with Ruswandi and Suhendi, who emphasize that the internalization of religious moderation among elementary school students is supported by the integration of moderation values into learning, teacher exemplification, a conducive school environment, and continuous habituation [31]. In SDN Jamban 1, however, these processes extended beyond formal instructional activities into everyday social relations among students with different religious backgrounds. The Religious Moderation Corner further provided a visible and shared space through which values of tolerance, equality, and peaceful coexistence could be encountered and practiced collectively.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that religious moderation at SDN Jambean 1 Kediri develops through students' everyday experiences of learning, interacting, and living together with differences. Rather than being formed through religious instruction alone, moderation is nurtured through teacher role modelling, inclusive classroom practices, the 5S culture, collaborative activities, equal participation, and the Religious Moderation Corner. Through these experiences, values such as tolerance, equality, cooperation, and respect gradually become part of students' everyday relationships.

Viewed through Berger's Social Construction of Reality, the findings illustrate a continuous process of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Moderation values expressed through teachers' practices and school activities were repeatedly experienced by students and gradually became part of the school's shared culture. These experiences were then reflected in students' attitudes and behaviour, particularly in their willingness to interact across religious differences, cooperate with peers, participate in shared activities, and respond to diversity with respect and acceptance. This shows that religious moderation becomes meaningful when it moves from values that are taught to values that are experienced and practiced in everyday school life.

The study highlights the role of inclusive primary schools as social spaces where children can learn to understand and appreciate differences through real relationships and shared experiences. Although this study is limited to one school and does not examine the long-term development of students' attitudes beyond the school environment, its findings suggest that religious moderation is strengthened when respect for difference becomes part of the school's everyday culture. Overall, religious moderation among children grows not simply through what they are taught, but through what they repeatedly experience, practice, and gradually embrace in living and learning together.

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