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## Implementation of Religious Moderation Values in Early Childhood (Research at Joy Kids Kindergarten Tawang District Tasikmalaya City West Java)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the implementation of religious moderation values in early childhood at Joy Kids Kindergarten, Tawang District, Tasikmalaya City, West Java. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study, which allows for an in-depth understanding of the process, meaning, and context of implementing religious moderation in an early childhood education environment. The subjects of the study included teachers, principals, and parents of students who were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the learning process and management of character values in schools. Data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation, documentation studies, and interviews to obtain a comprehensive picture of learning strategies, social interactions, and school culture that support the internalization of moderation values. The results of the study showed that the implementation of religious and socio-emotional moderation values in early childhood was effective with a play approach that was in accordance with the child's developmental stage (developmentally appropriate). The golden period of social imitation was utilized optimally, where teachers and peers acted as role models in instilling attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and anti-violence. The role of teachers as active facilitators and examples of polite language are key factors in the success of moderation learning, although further training is still needed so that the application of moderation values is not merely symbolic. In addition, the aspect of acceptance of religious traditions and rituals needs to be strengthened so that children can appreciate diversity more deeply. Thus, Joy Kids Kindergarten has succeeded in creating an inclusive and harmonious learning environment, but it still needs to develop a program to strengthen traditions and increase teacher capacity so that moderation values can be embedded comprehensively in children's characters.

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia as a multicultural and multireligious country has its own challenges in maintaining social harmony and diversity. With more than 1,300 ethnic groups, hundreds of regional languages, and various religions and beliefs practiced by its people, the potential for social conflict due to differences in identity is very large. These differences, if not managed properly, can cause friction that threatens national unity. Therefore, ongoing efforts are needed from the government, community leaders, and educational institutions to instill the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and national spirit (Hakim, L.

2022). Multicultural education, interfaith dialogue, and fair law enforcement are some of the important steps in creating an inclusive and peaceful social space. Thus, Indonesia's diversity can be a strength, not a source of division. In this context, religious moderation is an important approach to forming the character of a tolerant, just, and peaceful society. Religious moderation does not mean obscuring religious teachings, but rather teaching a balanced attitude in carrying out these teachings—not extreme right which tends to be fanatical and intolerant, nor extreme left which ignores the core values of religion (Elvina, Y. 2022). This concept emphasizes the importance of a middle attitude, namely being religious wisely, proportionally, and contextually without sacrificing the basic principles of faith (Harahap, AS, Nofianti, R., & Agustia, NR 2023). In the context of multicultural and multireligious Indonesia, religious moderation is key to creating social harmony and preventing religious-based conflicts (Hakim, L., et al. 2024). With moderation, a person can still be religious without having to force their beliefs on others. This attitude also teaches tolerance, mutual respect, and openness to differences of opinion, both within religious communities and between religious communities. Therefore, religious moderation is not a form of compromise with religious values, but rather a way to keep religion a blessing for the entire universe (Madiyono, M., & Haq, MZ 2023).

Efforts to instill the values of religious moderation need to start from an early age, considering that childhood is a crucial phase in the formation of character, mindset, and life values (Munawaroh, M. 2024). At this stage, children are in the golden age of cognitive and affective development, where they easily absorb various information and form attitudes based on their surroundings. Therefore, moderation education is not only the responsibility of formal institutions such as schools, but also the family as the first environment that shapes children's perspectives on diversity. Through the habit of being tolerant, respecting differences, and learning to live side by side peacefully, children will grow into individuals who are able to respect religious and cultural diversity (Munawaroh, M. 2024). The education curriculum also needs to be directed to instill inclusive and humanist values that are in accordance with the spirit of nationalism. If children are introduced to the importance of moderation from an early age, then in the future they will be better prepared to become a generation that is wise in religion and interacting in a pluralistic society (Lestari, IT, et al. 2020). Early childhood is very receptive to the values taught, both through teacher behavior, the environment, and the learning approach provided in educational units. Therefore, early childhood education institutions (PAUD), such as kindergartens, are a strategic place to instill the basic values of tolerance, empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect (Lestari, IT, Basuki, ISS, Raziqin, K., & Setiawan, B. 2020).

Joy Kids Kindergarten located in Tawang District, Tasikmalaya City, West Java, is one of the PAUD institutions that implements character education based on diversity values. The uniqueness of the learning approach and the multicultural background of the students make this school an interesting object to study, especially in the context of implementing the values of religious moderation. Schools with diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds present complex social dynamics but at the same time are a great opportunity to instill the values of tolerance and mutual respect. In an environment like this, the learning approach does not only focus on academic aspects, but also on strengthening character and forming moderate religious attitudes. Teachers have a central role as facilitators who bridge differences and create an inclusive and harmonious learning atmosphere. Through daily interactions, extracurricular activities, and the

integration of moderation values in subjects, students can learn to live side by side peacefully in diversity. Therefore, examining how the values of religious moderation are implemented in the context of multicultural schools will make an important contribution to the development of a character education model that is relevant to the current social conditions in Indonesia.

This research is important to be conducted in order to determine the extent to which the strategies and methods used by teachers in internalizing the values of religious moderation to children. Teachers have a strategic role as agents of change who not only transfer knowledge, but also instill moral and spiritual values in students. In the context of basic education, where children are in the early stages of forming their identity and character, the approach used by teachers in conveying the values of moderation greatly determines the success of the learning process of these values. This research is expected to be able to concretely describe various pedagogical approaches, teaching methods, and daily practices in the classroom that support the formation of tolerant, open, and balanced attitudes in religion. In addition, the findings of this study can be a reference for curriculum development, teacher training, and educational policies that are oriented towards strengthening national character and harmony in diversity. In addition, this study also aims to identify the challenges and successes experienced by educational institutions in implementing the concept of moderation from an early age. The implementation of religious moderation in the school environment, especially at the elementary education level, is certainly inseparable from various dynamics that influence the learning process, such as limited resources, teachers' understanding of the concept of moderation, and the social and cultural background of students. By exploring these challenges, this study is expected to provide a real picture of the obstacles faced in the field, both from internal school aspects and external aspects such as support from parents and the community. On the other hand, this study will also explore the best practices that schools have successfully implemented in instilling the values of religious moderation, including innovations in learning methods, project-based activities, and cross-religious collaboration in school activities. The results of this identification will be very useful in formulating strategic recommendations that can be applied more widely in Indonesia's multicultural education system.

By examining the implementation of religious moderation values in Joy Kids Kindergarten, it is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to the development of a character education model that is in line with the spirit of diversity and tolerance in Indonesia. This study is also expected to be a reference for other educational institutions in designing curricula and learning approaches that support the formation of a moderate and inclusive generation.

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to examine the implementation of religious moderation values in early childhood at Joy Kids Kindergarten, Tawang District, Tasikmalaya City, West Java. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore in depth the process, meaning, and context of religious moderation practices in early childhood education environments. Case studies were chosen because they allow researchers to understand the phenomenon as a whole in a real and limited context. The main focus of this study is to observe how religious moderation values are internalized through learning strategies, social interactions, and school culture, as well as how teachers and schools face challenges in their

implementation (Budiman, A. 2020).

### **Subjects and Location of Research**

The subjects in this study consisted of teachers, principals, and several parents of students at Joy Kids Kindergarten. The selection of informants was carried out purposively, with the criteria of informants who understand and are directly involved in the learning process and management of character values in schools (Hidayat, AG, & Haryati, T. 2019).

### **Data collection technique**

Data collection is carried out through three main techniques:

Participatory observation in the classroom and school environment to observe learning activities, interactions between children, and the habituation of tolerance and diversity values. Documentation studies, such as syllabi, school work programs, learning media, and activity records relevant to the research theme.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process includes the stages of data reduction, data categorization based on themes, interpretation of meaning, and drawing conclusions. The three main themes that are the focus of the analysis are: teaching strategies, values taught, and challenges of implementation in the field (Dawis, AM, et al. 2024). To maintain data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used, namely comparing data from various techniques (observation, documentation) and from various informants. Field notes and interview results were also retested through member checking with informants to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation. Through this approach, the study is expected to provide a complete and in-depth picture of how the values of religious moderation can be instilled early on in the context of multicultural education such as in Joy Kids Kindergarten.

## **7 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The results of a systematic literature review of 15 scientific articles published between 2015 and 2025 show that the implementation of religious moderation values in early childhood has become a concern in various educational contexts, especially in efforts to instill tolerant, inclusive, and peace-loving characters from an early age. Based on thematic analysis, three main themes were found that are common patterns in the practice of religious moderation in PAUD environments: teaching strategies, core values taught, and challenges of implementation in the field. The teaching strategies used by educators reflect efforts to convey moderation values through fun methods, in accordance with the characteristics of early age, such as through picture stories, role-playing, songs, and collaborative activities that train empathy and cooperation. The core values taught include tolerance, mutual respect, honesty, and togetherness—all delivered in the context of everyday life so that they are easily understood and internalized by children. Meanwhile, challenges to implementation in the field include teachers' limited understanding of the concept of religious moderation as a whole, lack of special training, and the influence of the environment outside the school that is sometimes not in line with the values taught in the classroom. These findings indicate that the practice of religious

moderation in PAUD has begun to be implemented in real terms, but still requires strengthening in terms of educator capacity, an integrated curriculum, and consistent support from the education ecosystem.

First, in terms of teaching strategies, various studies show that the most effective approach is through contextual, fun, and experience-based learning methods. Teachers use stories, songs, role-playing, and group activities to convey values such as tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences. In several PAUD institutions, as reported in the articles by Rahmawati (2022) and Yusuf (2020), children are invited to dialogue about differences in simple language and are introduced to cultural and religious diversity through easily understood symbols, such as traditional clothing and neutral religious activities. Second, regarding the values of religious moderation that are instilled, most of the literature highlights the importance of building character such as tolerance, not being easily judgmental, loving peace, being fair in acting, and having an attitude of mutual respect. These values are applied in children's daily activities, such as sharing toys regardless of their friends' backgrounds, helping friends with different beliefs, and learning to resolve conflicts peacefully. Studies by Sari (2021) and Lestari (2019) also emphasize that religious moderation is not only taught directly by teachers, but also exemplified through behavior and role models. Third, in terms of implementation challenges, it was found that not all teachers have an adequate understanding of the concept of religious moderation. Some teachers still tend to teach their religious teachings exclusively without emphasizing universal values that apply across religions. In addition, limited training and teaching materials that support moderation are also obstacles. Several studies, such as those conducted by Prasetyo (2023), suggest the need for teacher training and the systematic integration of moderation values into the PAUD curriculum. Overall, the results of this study indicate that early childhood education has great potential in instilling the values of religious moderation. Successful implementation generally involves the active role of teachers as value facilitators, parental involvement, and a learning environment that supports inclusivity. These findings provide a strong foundation for institutions such as TK Joy Kids to develop a more focused and sustainable moderation-based learning model.

## **Discussion**

### **Implementation in Joy Kids Kindergarten**

#### **a. Curriculum Planning**

During the “Me and My Friends Are Different but Friendly” themed week at Joy Kids Kindergarten, activities began on Monday with a self-introduction session. Children shook hands, sang the “Hello Hello” song, then shared baby photos to observe physical differences while making fingerprints—emphasizing that each person is uniquely created by God. On Tuesday, the teacher opened the class with the “Sahabat” clap. Children listened to the bilingual big book “Our Friends Around the World,” then played a mini drama by greeting friends in Indonesian, English, and regional languages, so that they learned about language diversity while enriching their vocabulary. Wednesday focused on mathematical intelligence and respect through fruit kebab cooking activities: children guessed the sweet and sour taste, grouped fruit by color, counted skewers, then divided the results evenly while learning to give polite comments. On Thursday, after practicing regional songs, they tried the traditional games “bakiak” and “engklek.” This activity trained gross motor coordination, teamwork, and introduced the origins of Indonesian games; the teacher emphasized fair play and taking turns. The peak of the theme took



place on Friday. The “Blessing Friday” session opened the day with stories of gratitude, then the children created a collaborative mural on a large canvas, painting themselves in different skin colors and traditional clothing to combine into a “We Are Friends” poster. They also took turns playing simple percussion at varying tempos, feeling the harmony in the diversity of rhythms. Each day ended with a short reflection, a prayer of gratitude, and an appreciation such as “butterfly clapping.” Throughout the week, teachers recorded anecdotes of interactions, set up differentiation options—a quiet corner with noise-cancelling headphones for sensory-sensitive children, a wide-grip drawing tool for those who needed it, and a peer system for shy children—and engaged parents through baby photo submissions and a “New Friend” challenge at home. The series fostered awareness that differences in physical, cultural, and interest are gifts that enrich friendships.

At Joy Kids Kindergarten, children's social-emotional development—especially moderation values in the form of sharing and empathy—is guided through gradual indicators. In the early stages, teachers help children to lend toys and recognize basic expressions of friends. As the weeks go by, children are encouraged to spontaneously offer their toys, share snacks fairly, and express sympathy when they see friends upset. When the development indicators are achieved, they begin to be able to take other people's perspectives: listen to friends' stories until they finish, repeat the main points of the conversation before responding, and offer simple help such as getting tissues (Praptono, P., et al. 2020). The final target is the advanced indicator, where children design a turn system or tool borrowing list without teacher instructions, adjust games to be comfortable for sensitive sensory friends, and even mediate conflicts with compromise—for example, proposing to take turns wearing clogs or combining ideas during group projects. Concrete implementation can be seen in daily activities: sharing fruit at the fruit kebab cooking class, the morning “Feeling Circle” to mark moods and then respond to each other, a peace table complete with sand timers and solution cards when there is a dispute, to the collaborative mural project “We Are Friends” which requires inclusive role-sharing. Teachers monitor with anecdotal notes, Beginning level rubric-Developing Mastery is filled weekly, photo-video portfolios, and reflections on the stars “I Share” and “I Empathize” that the children themselves attach. This series of indicators and monitoring fosters habits of sharing, caring, and middle-ground skills—the foundation of moderation that is important for harmonious community life in the future.

#### b. Learning strategies

In implementing the center model in Joy Kids Kindergarten, teachers open three choice areas—Blocks, Arts, and Role Play—and prepare a “Nusantara Culture” corner containing traditional clothing and musical instruments from various regions to support the theme “Me and My Friends Are Different but Friendly”. Children register themselves on a choice board with pictures, learn to make decisions and be responsible for their choices. In the Block center, they design a “Friendship Village” by arranging miniature traditional houses from Minang, Toraja, Papua, and Java, then together add a “bridge of brotherhood” that connects all the buildings, so that compromise and cooperation are created naturally. In the Arts center, canvas, paint, batik paper, and mini angklung are provided so that children are free to create the “My Diverse Friends” collage; teachers emphasize the attitude of sharing tools and appreciating the originality of work, then exhibit them in the “Nusantara Culture Gallery”. The Role Play Center utilizes racks of traditional costumes and tifa, tambourine, or kentongan percussion instruments; Children take turns being dancers, tour guides, or traditional market vendors in a “Friendship

Festival” scenario, negotiating their turn to perform, and complimenting each other’s performances—a real-life empathy exercise. Although free to choose, each child is encouraged to try at least two different centers throughout the week to experience a variety of activities. After playing, they put smiley stickers on their “Today I Share/Empathy” reflection cards and explain why, while the teacher documents the process in a photovideo for feedback to parents. This strategy allows children to experience the diversity of Indonesian culture not only as knowledge, but as a socioemotional experience: sharing tools, appreciating friends’ ideas, and being proud to collaborate in diversity—a strong foundation for the value of moderation from an early age.

To reinforce the value of moderation in the learning strategy, the teacher added an Inclusive Storytelling session using a picture book entitled “Pelangi di Jalan Sunyi”, a story of two friends—Ayu who is Hindu and Malik who is Muslim—who plant trees together in the open field of their village. The activity began with a picture walk; children were invited to observe illustrations of temples, mosques, and the prayer clothes of each character while guessing the storyline. During the reading, the teacher used finger puppets to change soft voices for Ayu and Malik, then stopped at certain scenes to ask, “What did Ayu feel when Malik wished her a happy Galungan day?”—provoking empathy and perspective. After the story was finished, a reflective discussion was held in a circle: children were given three emotion cards—happy, confused, and sad—and asked to choose the card that described their feelings when they heard the part where the two almost had an argument because their prayer schedules clashed; they then explained their reasons, practicing emotional management and polite argumentation skills. The teacher closed the session with a buddy drawing activity: each child paired up with a friend they were not yet close with to draw two places of worship side by side on one piece of paper, emphasizing the concept of “different but friendly.” The resulting images are displayed on the “Rainbow of Friendship” board to be appreciated together. This inclusive storytelling not only enriches literacy, but also provides concrete experiences in understanding diversity of beliefs, fostering respect, and practicing empathy—complementing the block center, art, and role-playing in instilling moderation in Joy Kids Kindergarten.

As the peak of the learning strategy, Joy Kids Kindergarten implemented a mini Project Based Learning entitled “Tolerance Map” collage. The teacher divided the children into small heterogeneous groups of four to five people, ensuring that each group included friends with different center interests. The project began with a light investigation session: the children watched a photo broadcast of places of worship—mosques, churches, temples, monasteries—as well as markets and city parks where residents mingled. They then discussed the key question, “Where can different people be friends?” The discussion was written on a simple mind mapping sheet. The next stage was material planning. The children made a list of images or textures they wanted to stick on, for example magazine clippings with pictures of places of worship, dry leaves from the school yard as a tolerance garden, and colorful paper for a pedestrian path connecting points of diversity. Each member was given a role: picture cutter, layout arranger, gluer, and legend recorder. The teacher only acted as a facilitator, encouraging compromise when different voices emerged.

In the production phase, the groups worked on A2 cardboard with the outline of an “imaginary city” drawn on it. Children stuck pictures of a mosque in the north, a church in the west, a temple in the south, and a monastery in the east, then added a



“friendship road” path in the middle with rainbow-colored paper pieces. They also stuck icons of little people made of folded paper walking between the locations, marking interfaith interactions. The remaining space was filled with decorations of trees, markets, and schools, as symbols of inclusive public space. After the collage was finished, each group presented the “Tolerance Map” in front of the class using a simple sentence: “This is the rainbow road so everyone can visit each other.” The friends who watched gave two compliments and one constructive question, practicing assertive communication. The teacher closed with metacognitive reflection: children stuck star stickers on the “Collaboration”, “Sharing”, or “Empathy” charts according to the behavior they felt most during the project. The collage was then displayed in the school corridor along with a short narrative made by the children, and photos of the process were sent to the parents. Parents through online groups. Through this miniPBL, children learn to design, make decisions together, and realize the importance of an equal meeting space for all backgrounds. The collaborative process—from simple research, role-sharing, production, to presentation—becomes a concrete experience of practicing tolerance, complementing inclusive storytelling and the center model in building a foundation of moderation at Joy Kids Kindergarten.

### c. School Culture

As a form of school culture that supports diversity, Joy Kids Kindergarten implements “Multilingual Greetings” at every activity transition. When morning comes, the teacher stands at the gate with two students on daily assignments; they greet their friends with a series of greetings: “Good morning!”, “Good morning!”, “Shalom!”, and “Om Swastiastu!”. Children are then free to choose which greeting they want to reply to—making room for their respective identities while introducing cross-religious and cultural vocabulary. In the classroom, the circletime routine opens with a four-beat rhythmic clap; at each beat the teacher and children say a different greeting, then place their hands on their chests as a symbol of respect. Transitions between activities, such as moving from the Balok center to the Art Center, are accompanied by short alternating greetings—for example, the first group says “Shalom!”, the next group replies “Om Swastiastu!”—so that the vocabulary is embedded in memory through fun repetition. Every Friday, a “Greeting Ambassador” is rotated weekly to lead non-Muslim prayers.—denomination after uniting the four greetings in one sentence, emphasizing that various greetings can coexist harmoniously. This policy is reinforced by the visual board “Salam Nusantara” near the classroom door which displays an illustration of a child saying hello in traditional clothing, complete with simple pronunciation text so that parents can also practice at home. By making multilingual greetings a daily habit—not just a one-time thing—Joy Kids Kindergarten builds an inclusive atmosphere that celebrates diversity from the first step a child takes in school.

As part of the school culture that emphasizes the values of inclusivity and moderation, Joy Kids Kindergarten routinely holds communal celebrations of major holidays, especially to welcome Christmas and Eid al-Fitr. In this activity, children from various religious backgrounds gather together to make greeting cards together. The activity begins with the teacher explaining the meaning of the two major holidays in a simple and friendly manner, emphasizing the message of friendship and mutual respect. The children are divided into mixed groups, consisting of Christian, Muslim, and other friends, to work together to choose materials, draw, and write positive messages on the greeting cards. During the process, the teacher facilitates light discussions about each

other's traditions, building curiosity and empathy for their friends' cultures. The resulting cards are then displayed in a special corner with the theme "Friendship in Diversity" as a symbol of togetherness. Not only that, the cards will also be distributed to the children's families and the community around the school as a sign of love and respect between religious communities. Through this communal celebration, Joy Kids Kindergarten instills an attitude of mutual respect, sharing happiness, and strengthening the bonds of friendship across faiths from an early age, while building an inclusive and warm school culture.

As an important part of the school culture that supports social-emotional development and the value of moderation, Joy Kids Kindergarten presents a Peace Corner, a special area for reflection when minor conflicts occur between children. The corner is designed as a comfortable and safe space, equipped with soft pillows, problem-solving storybooks, and colorful emotion cards that help children recognize their own feelings and those of their friends. When there is a minor dispute—such as fighting over a toy or a misunderstanding while playing—the teacher directs the children involved to sit together in the Peace Corner. There, they are guided to express what they are feeling in turn in simple and polite language, using the emotion cards as a tool. The teacher facilitates a short discussion so that children can listen to each other, understand each other's perspectives, and together find a peaceful solution, such as taking turns using a toy or apologizing. Afterwards, children are asked to do a "peaceful handshake" or choose an "I Am Peaceful Today" sticker to stick on the classroom reflection board. The Peace Corner is also a place where children can learn light relaxation techniques, such as taking deep breaths or counting to ten, so that they can manage their emotions before returning to play. By presenting the Peace Corner as a regular part of the school culture, Joy Kids Kindergarten fosters awareness and moderation skills from an early age—building children's ability to resolve conflicts independently and harmoniously in an atmosphere full of respect and affection.

#### **Stakeholder Role**

In their role as crucial stakeholders in Joy Kids Kindergarten, teachers serve as the main facilitators in building attitudes of tolerance and moderation through simple discussions about differences. Teachers actively lead small group conversations or class circles with themes such as "What makes us different?" or "Why should we respect each other?". In these sessions, teachers use language that children can easily understand and ask open-ended questions that encourage children to share experiences and opinions without fear or hesitation. In addition, teachers provide concrete examples of the use of polite and friendly language, such as the words "please", "thank you", "sorry", and "may I...?" which are daily communication patterns. When there are differences of opinion or minor conflicts, teachers model how to convey disagreements politely, for example, "I understand your opinion, but I think..." or "How about we try this together?". With this approach, teachers not only teach the concept of tolerance in theory, but also practice it directly as a behavioral model that children can imitate. The role of teachers as discussion facilitators and examples of polite language is an important foundation in creating an inclusive, warm learning environment that supports children's social-emotional development at Joy Kids Kindergarten.

In their role as very strategic stakeholders at Joy Kids Kindergarten, parents are actively involved through various activities that support the formation of moderation values in children from an early age. One of the main efforts is the implementation of a

parenting moderation workshop that is routinely held every few months. In this workshop, parents are given an in-depth understanding of the concept of moderation—such as the importance of sharing, empathy, and tolerance in everyday life—as well as practical ways to apply it at home. In addition, they are invited to discuss the challenges and solutions in accompanying children in facing social and cultural differences in the surrounding environment. To strengthen two-way communication between home and school, Joy Kids Kindergarten also provides a home-school communication journal that is used periodically. This journal functions as a daily or weekly media, where teachers and parents share information about children's social-emotional development, such as sharing attitudes, empathy skills, or positive experiences and challenges faced. Through this journal, teachers can provide specific advice and reinforcement, while parents can report conditions or events at home that affect children's behavior. The involvement of parents in this workshop and communication journal builds synergy between formal and informal education, creating a consistent environment in instilling moderation values. With the active support of parents as primary partners, Joy Kids Kindergarten children find it easier to internalize attitudes of mutual respect and tolerance, so that they grow into individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also wise and harmonious in social interactions.

In evaluating the suitability of learning practices in Joy Kids Kindergarten with indicators of religious moderation, it can be seen that the program implemented has shown significant strength, especially in the aspects of tolerance and anti-violence. Children are consistently taught to respect differences in religion and beliefs through various inclusive activities such as interfaith storytelling, celebrating big days together, and multilingual greetings that build respect and mutual understanding between friends. This approach has succeeded in fostering an attitude of mutual acceptance and avoiding conflict, which are the main characteristics of moderation in the context of religious diversity. However, from the results of observations and reflections of teachers and input from parents, there are areas that still need strengthening, namely in the aspect of acceptance and appreciation of local traditions inherent in each religion or culture. For example, some children and parents still show a lack of understanding or appreciation of rituals or customs that are considered foreign or different from their own family's customs (Sari, DP, & Sutarto, S. 2022). This shows that learning practices need to expand the space for exploration and in-depth understanding of these traditions, not just the introduction of symbols or traditional clothing. To strengthen the aspect of accepting this tradition, Joy Kids Kindergarten can add programs such as cultural visits, introduction of folklore related to religious traditions, and invitation of resource persons from various communities to share experiences and ritual practices interactively. In addition, teachers can also integrate more structured discussions about the meaning and values behind the tradition, so that children are able to see it as an important part of their identity and shared heritage that deserves to be respected. With this strengthening, the suitability of learning practices with indicators of religious moderation will be more comprehensive, not only emphasizing tolerance and anti-violence, but also fostering a deep sense of acceptance of the diversity of traditions as part of the nation's cultural wealth.

The implementation of moderation learning in Joy Kids Kindergarten is effective because it uses a play approach that is appropriate to the child's developmental stage (developmentally appropriate). Through fun and meaningful play activities, children can naturally learn the values of tolerance, empathy, and cooperation without feeling burdened by abstract concepts that are difficult to understand at an early age. This

approach accommodates children's needs to learn through exploration, social interaction, and direct experience, so that the learning process becomes more natural and enjoyable (Lawolo, AN, et al. 2024). In addition, Joy Kids Kindergarten optimally utilizes the golden period of social imitation which is a critical phase in which children are very responsive to examples and role models from their surroundings, especially teachers and peers. Teachers consistently model polite, respectful, and inclusive behavior, so that children imitate language, attitudes, and ways of interacting that reflect the values of moderation (Salsabila, A. 2024). For example, when teachers use polite words such as "please", "thank you", and "sorry", and display patience and respect for friends' opinions, children spontaneously adopt these behaviors in their daily activities. In addition to teachers, peers also play an important role as social models. Through joint play in centers, storytelling, and collaborative projects, children learn to observe and imitate how friends solve problems peacefully, share toys, or respect differences. This learning environment rich in positive social interactions strengthens the internalization of moderation values without pressure, utilizing children's natural tendencies to imitate and adapt (Hambali, KH 2024). With the right play approach and utilization of the golden period of social imitation, the implementation of moderation values in Joy Kids Kindergarten has not only succeeded in forming knowledge, but also building positive social attitudes and habits, which will be a strong foundation in the development of children's character in the future.

The role of teachers is the main key to the successful implementation of moderation values in Joy Kids Kindergarten, because teachers are not only teachers, but also direct role models for children in everyday life. In order for this role to run effectively and not merely symbolically, comprehensive and ongoing advanced training is needed for teachers. This training is designed to deepen teachers' understanding of the concept of moderation, cultural and religious diversity, and inclusive learning strategies that are appropriate for early childhood development (Afifah, ZN 2024). In addition to theory, the training also emphasizes practical skills such as discussion facilitation techniques that can explore children's thoughts openly, how to manage conflict constructively, and methods of providing examples of polite behavior and consistent empathy. Teachers are also equipped with self-reflection skills so that they can identify and overcome personal biases that may affect interactions with children or parents (Yuliana, C., 2025). This advanced training is not only carried out once, but becomes a routine program with mentoring sessions, class observations, and constructive feedback from mentors or character education experts. That way, teachers can continue to develop their competence and motivation, and strengthen their commitment to instilling moderation values in a real and sustainable manner. With the active, competent, and empowered role of teachers in implementing the values of moderation, Joy Kids Kindergarten will be able to create an inclusive, harmonious learning environment that supports children's optimal social-emotional growth and development, far from just a symbol or formality.

#### **Implications of Integrating Religious Moderation Values into PAUD Standards**

Integration of religious moderation into the National PAUD Standards should ideally be carried out comprehensively but still easy for teachers and children. In the content standards, the achievement of social-emotional learning and religious values can be expanded with indicators of tolerance, empathy, and justice, then tied to each national theme—for example, the theme "Myself & My Friends" contains a picture story of

children of various religions playing together. The process standards require an investigation-based play approach: children are invited to explore "mini houses of worship" made of cardboard to find similarities in rituals, so that curiosity and awareness of diversity grow together (Yati Tasin, R. 2023). In the assessment standards, teachers record sharing behavior, do not mock differences, and are able to work together on authentic assessment rubrics. In order to facilitate this, the standards for educators and education personnel include short microlearning training with case studies of children's conflicts and inclusive mediation techniques. The learning environment is also supported through infrastructure standards: neutral decorations, diversity posters, and reading corners displaying interfaith story books. At the management level, PAUD units establish SOPs for joint activities with parents of different faiths and monthly reflections on moderation (Megawati, E. 2022). Financing standards can allocate part of the BOS funds or non-routine sources to purchase cross-cultural symbol props and invite resource persons for mini diversity festivals. Finally, the outcome standards contain new development items—for example "demonstrating an inclusive attitude towards differences"—which are monitored through routine observations. With thematic curriculum management, tiered teacher training, family-community partnerships, and short-cycle monitoring, religious moderation is organically embedded in the PAUD teaching and learning process, forming a foundation for tolerance and harmony from an early age without adding to the administrative burden.

The development of local children's story books that highlight diversity begins with research into the wisdom of each region—exploring folk tales, traditions, and role models from various ethnicities and religions through interviews with cultural figures and parents (Prasetyo, TB 2024). The results of this inventory are formulated into a simple language script, using five-word sentences-eight words with repetitive rhythm and onomatopoeia to make it easy for a 48-year-old to read aloud. The characters are intentionally diverse: the children have different names, dress, and like different foods, but are portrayed as equals; minor conflicts are resolved collaboratively so that the values of tolerance, empathy, and mutual cooperation feel natural without being preachy. The brightly palleted illustrations feature fair proportions of skin color, physical features, traditional houses, and religious accessories—giving cultural cues without highlighting one identity. The creative process involves the community: a drawing workshop with children produces a "work corner" at the end of the book, while reading tests in preschool/elementary school classes ensure vocabulary and sentence length are on target. The printed version uses eco-friendly paper, accompanied by a bilingual audio story QR code (Indonesian-regional languages); digital versions in the form of interactive ebooks with light animations, traditional sound effects, large letters, and braille or sign language video options for accessibility. Distribution is carried out through thematic PAUD packages, mobile libraries and free literacy applications, supported by the #BacaBersama campaign which invites parents to record reading sessions at home. The impact is monitored through teacher observations—whether children are more diligent in sharing or greeting friends of different religions—as well as parent surveys, so that this feedback triggers the next iteration of titles, such as stories of the Nusantara food festival or adventures in the floating market. Thus, simple-language local story books have a dual function: instilling religious moderation while fostering cultural pride and reading interest in Indonesian children.

The school-religious community partnership scheme for visiting places of worship can be built through a "three-layer collaboration" model. The first layer is an

umbrella agreement between the PAUD/SD unit and the local interfaith harmony forum that includes an annual visit schedule, safety guidelines, and a commitment not to carry out missionary activities. The second layer, a liaison team—consisting of religious education teachers, house of worship managers, interfaith youth leaders, and parent representatives—prepares a detailed plan: visit theme (e.g. “cleanliness ritual before praying”), 60-minute tour itinerary, facilitator tasks, and dress code. They also prepare student worksheets containing simple observation questions (“What do you see in the prayer room?”) so that learning objectives are focused. The third layer is post-visit reflective guidance; teachers facilitate class discussions using photos or symbolic objects taken home (e.g. flower offerings, pieces of woven coconut leaves) to emphasize shared values of cleanliness, tranquility, and love for one another. This scheme is even stronger if supported by an MoU with the education office and religious institutions so that places of worship obtain “child-friendly” certificates, while schools receive regular access to resource persons for interfaith celebrations. Through a planned partnership structure, visits to places of worship are transformed into safe, inclusive, and moderate religious learning experiences.

## CONCLUSION

Case study research at Joy Kids Kindergarten shows that the implementation of religious and social-emotional moderation values in early childhood runs effectively through a learning approach that is appropriate to child development, namely the play approach (developmentally appropriate). The golden period of social imitation is utilized well, where teachers and peers act as role models in internalizing attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and anti-violence. In addition, the involvement of teachers as active facilitators and examples of polite behavior are key factors in the success of moderation learning. However, the effectiveness of this teacher's role still needs to be supported by further training so that the application of moderation values is not symbolic, but is truly internalized in daily practice. Although the aspects of tolerance and anti-violence have been achieved well, this study also found that acceptance of religious traditions and rituals still requires further strengthening so that children can appreciate diversity more deeply and comprehensively. Thus, Joy Kids Kindergarten has succeeded in creating an inclusive and harmonious learning environment, but it is necessary to continue to develop programs to strengthen traditions and increase teacher capacity so that moderation values can be embedded comprehensively in children's characters.

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