A MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS-BASED MODEL OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION INTERNALIZATION TO PREVENT RADICALISM AMONG GENERATION Z

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Keywords:	ABSTRACTS
Religious Moderation, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Radicalism, Generation Z	**Purpose:** This study aims to develop and validate the Integrative Religious Moderation Model based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (MBIM-RM) as an effective framework for internalizing moderation values to prevent radicalism among Generation Z students. **Method:** A qualitative multi-case study design was employed at SMAN 1 Garut and SMKN 1 Garut, involving teachers, school leaders, and students selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected via interviews, observations, and document analysis, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. **Result:** The findings reveal that the internalization of religious moderation occurs through five interrelated stages: contextualization, actualization, role modeling and social habituation, inclusivity-differentiation, and digital externalization, with each stage reflecting the fulfillment of students' psychological, social, and moral needs. Moral development is most effective when schools create an ecosystem that meets students' intrinsic needs for safety, social acceptance, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The integration of digital moral engagement is a significant innovation, as it allows students to develop ethical moral agency in digital environments. **Conclusion:** Theoretically, MBIM-RM bridges Maslow's motivation theory, Bandura's social learning theory, and Berger & Luckmann's social construction theory, positioning moderation as a dynamic psychosocial ecosystem rather than a static moral attribute. **Implication:** Practically, this model offers a framework that can be replicated and adapted by educators and policymakers through reflective, participatory learning that is responsive to technological developments. Future research is recommended to use mixed-method and longitudinal approaches, integrating AI-based learning analytics to refine the model in various educational contexts.

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A. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the world has witnessed the resurgence of religious radicalism that threatens global peace, pluralism, and interfaith harmony. Violent extremism, which is often rooted in exclusivist interpretations of religion, continues to evolve through sophisticated ideological networks and digital ecosystems. According to the *Global Terrorism Index,* the world recorded over 7,000 terrorism-related deaths in 2022, with the majority linked to extremist groups exploiting religious narratives for political mobilization. Scholars such as Roy and Mark argue that radicalism is no longer confined to physical violence but manifests symbolically through hate speech, identity polarization, and the digital dissemination of intolerance. (Alkhaldy & Alhrahshehr, 2022)

Digital media has dramatically transformed the dynamics of radicalization. Research by Mann et al., (2023) shows that online communities through algorithmic echo chambers serve as powerful incubators for ideological recruitment. The World Economic Forum (2023) further notes that *Generation Z* is particularly vulnerable to extremist narratives due to their high digital dependency and the search for identity during adolescence. Consequently, global education systems are being challenged to promote "resilience-based religious literacy" that emphasizes empathy, reflection, and intergroup collaboration. (Rolando, D. M., As'ad, M., & Setiawati, R., 2024)

Parallel to this global trend, *Maslow's hierarchy of needs* has re-emerged as a theoretical framework to understand why youth are drawn to radical ideologies. When basic psychological needs such as security, belonging, and recognition are unmet, young people are more susceptible to extremist ideologies that promise certainty and identity (Rappel & Vachon, 2023). Therefore, education must not only transfer knowledge but also fulfill these fundamental needs to prevent ideological vulnerability.

Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, has not been immune to the global wave of religious extremism. The *Global Terrorism Index (2020)* placed Indonesia at rank 37 out of 138 countries, highlighting recurring radical activities linked to transnational networks such as JAD and ISIS. Despite numerous deradicalization efforts from the establishment of *BNPT* (National Counter-Terrorism Agency) to the inclusion of *religious moderation* in the *PAI curriculum* studies show that ideological exclusivism remains latent in educational institutions (Rusli & Sugiarto, 2022).

A survey by the *Wahid Institute (2022)* revealed that 0.4% of Indonesia's population, or roughly 600,000 people, openly support radical ideologies. More concerningly, the *Ministry of Religious Affairs (2023)* found that 40% of civil servants (ASN) within the ministry demonstrated low levels of professional and moderate religious understanding. These data indicate that the nation's ideological resilience is still fragile, requiring educational innovations that not only emphasize doctrinal comprehension but also socio-emotional internalization.

Within Indonesia's multicultural landscape, radicalism manifests in multiple forms ideological (takfiri and anti-democratic), symbolic (rejection of national symbols), and digital (online extremism). Moghaddam's *Staircase to Terrorism* model (2005) remains relevant, illustrating that radicalization develops gradually from unmet psychological needs to ideological justification and eventual violence. Thus, preventing radicalism requires early educational interventions that restore meaning, belonging, and self-actualization in students' lived experiences.

The local context of *Garut Regency* offers a microcosm of Indonesia's broader ideological challenge. Research conducted at SMAN 1 Garut and SMKN 1 Garut revealed that radicalism among students tends to develop *latently and symbolically*, not through overt violence but through *exclusivism, ideological segregation, and social withdrawal*. This "silent radicalism" thrives within closed peer circles, digital groups, and informal religious networks that promote intolerance and moral absolutism.

Empirical findings show six major forms of radicalism among Garut students: (1) *ideological* (fanaticism, takfiri attitudes, rejection of democracy), (2) *symbolic* (refusal to salute the flag or celebrate national holidays), (3) *social-exclusionary* (segregation of minority peers), (4) *digital* (exposure to radical online content), (5) *structural-latent* (weak institutional vigilance), and (6) *psychological* (identity insecurity). These findings align with global patterns of youth radicalization described by Harpviken (2020), emphasizing that extremism often germinates within cognitive and affective domains long before violent behavior occurs.This suggests that early interventions targeting cognitive and emotional factors may be crucial in preventing the escalation of radicalization among youth.

The Garut case also reflects the psychosocial complexity of Generation Z. Students facing economic inequality, social alienation, and weak emotional support systems are more prone to ideological manipulation. As the dissertation notes, *if students' needs for safety, belonging, and recognition are unfulfilled, they tend to move upward along the staircase of radicalization*. This insight echoes Maslow's view that frustrated needs produce compensatory behaviors, including ideological radicalism.

Despite numerous studies on *religious moderation* in Indonesia (Suryanto, 2023; Sayyi, 2020; Royani, 2020; Arifin, 2020), most focus on *curricular integration* or *institutional policies*. Few have examined how values of moderation are internalized within the psychosocial structure of students, especially in the digital era. Existing frameworks such as Hakam & Nurdin's three-phase model (*transformation, transaction, transinternalization*) offer valuable pedagogical stages but lack integration with *motivational psychology* or *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*.

Furthermore, educational models addressing religious moderation often remain *cognitive and normative*, emphasizing knowledge transmission rather than emotional fulfillment or digital engagement. As noted in the dissertation, previous models tend to be *instructional and intrakuricular*, whereas today's digital youth require *cross-domain approaches* that align with their cognitive, emotional, and technological realities

Therefore, the theoretical gap lies in the absence of a comprehensive, *needs-based model* of religious moderation internalization that (1) integrates psychological motivation, (2) bridges classroom and digital spaces, and (3) operationalizes moderation as a holistic process addressing security, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.

This study aims to develop and validate a Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs-Based Model of religious moderation internalization to prevent radicalism among Generation Z students. The objectives are:

1. To identify the forms and causes of youth radicalism within educational environments, particularly in multicultural regions such as Garut.
2. To analyze the process and stages of value internalization in Islamic Religious Education (*PAI*) through dialogical, reflective, and participatory learning approaches.

3. To construct a five-stage model of internalization comprising contextualization, reflective actualization, social habituation, inclusiveness-differentiation, and positive digital externalization that aligns with students' psychological needs
4. To assess how fulfilling students' basic needs enhances their ideological resilience against extremism in both physical and digital learning spaces.

The study's conceptual foundation integrates Maslow's humanistic psychology with religious moderation theory. Maslow posits that human behavior is driven by hierarchical needs physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. When these needs are unmet, individuals experience *existential frustration*, making them susceptible to compensatory ideologies. Within this framework, religious moderation is not merely an ethical choice but a *psychological necessity* for balanced personal development.

By linking Maslow's hierarchy with *social learning theory (Bandura, 1986)* and *internalization theory (Hakam & Nurdin, 2012)*, this model situates moderation as a dynamic process of value transformation shaped by modeling, reinforcement, and reflection. It expands the understanding of internalization from a linear pedagogical act into an *ecological and transformative system* that addresses students' emotional, social, and digital realities

This research offers several critical novelties:
1. A Needs-Based Framework: Unlike previous models that emphasize moral or doctrinal transmission, this study introduces a *Maslow-based internalization model* that situates moderation as the fulfillment of human psychological needs. Radicalism is thus reframed not merely as a religious deviation but as an outcome of unmet existential needs.
2. An Integrative Five-Stage Model: The study formulates a *five-dimensional model* Contextualization, Reflective Actualization, Social Habituation, Inclusiveness-Differentiation, and Digital Externalization which holistically connects classroom learning, school culture, and digital engagement. This integrative design bridges *affective pedagogy* and *digital citizenship education*
3. A Transdisciplinary Synthesis: By merging *Islamic educational theory*, *psychological motivation*, and *digital literacy*, the model redefines religious moderation as a *transformative educational ecosystem* rather than a mere curriculum component.
4. Empirical Grounding in Generation Z Context: The model is derived from fieldwork in multicultural schools SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut—offering contextually rich insights into how moderation can be cultivated amid diversity and digital disruption.
5. A Paradigm Shift: Theoretically, this study advances a new paradigm in *religious education research* from normative indoctrination toward *ecological transformation*, positioning Islamic education as a psychosocial instrument for ideological resilience.

In the era of global digital disruption, religious radicalism represents not only a theological problem but also a psychological and sociocultural crisis. Addressing it requires education that fulfills the full spectrum of human needs safety, belonging, esteem, and actualization. By developing a Maslow's hierarchy-based model of religious moderation internalization, this study contributes a novel theoretical and practical framework for preventing radicalism among Generation Z. The model's adaptability and

empirical validation make it a promising tool for educators, policymakers, and religious institutions aiming to nurture moderate, resilient, and empathetic youth.

B. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative multi-case study approach aimed at uncovering the process of internalizing religious moderation values based on *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* as a preventive framework against radicalism among Generation Z students. The qualitative approach was selected to capture the depth of participants' experiences, meanings, and social–psychological dynamics that underlie moderate behavior within the context of Islamic education. The study was conducted at two purposively selected schools SMAN 1 Garut and SMKN 1 Garut which represent two distinct types of secondary education (academic and vocational) while sharing similar socio-religious diversity. This comparative configuration provided a meaningful context for exploring how moderation values are internalized through both formal and non-formal educational processes.

The participants consisted of teachers of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), school leaders, counselors or religious activity mentors, and students. In total, 34 participants were involved through purposive sampling, chosen based on their relevance and engagement with religious learning and moderation programs. The inclusion criteria required participants to have at least one year of experience in the school environment, active participation in religious and interfaith activities, and willingness to engage in reflective dialogue. This purposeful selection ensured that the data represented the diversity of experiences, perspectives, and practices related to the internalization of religious moderation within the school culture.

Data collection was conducted through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore participants' perceptions and lived experiences concerning tolerance, justice, and nationalism within the learning process. Observations were carried out over eight weeks through direct engagement in classroom activities and extracurricular events to capture how teachers modeled values and how students demonstrated moderation through interaction and reflection. Document analysis was performed on lesson plans, school regulations, religious moderation guidelines, and digital materials created by students to provide institutional and cultural context to the field data.

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and sites, combined with member checking and peer debriefing. Triangulation involved cross-verifying information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents to establish consistency and credibility. Member checking was conducted by returning preliminary interpretations to key participants for validation, ensuring that the findings accurately reflected their experiences. Peer debriefing sessions were held with two qualitative research experts to assess analytical consistency and to prevent subjective bias. All research activities were documented in an audit trail that included field notes, transcripts, and coding procedures to guarantee transparency and traceability of evidence. Data validity was evaluated using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which collectively strengthened the methodological integrity of the study.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three iterative stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, interview transcripts and observation notes were condensed into meaning units that represented essential themes of the internalization process. The data were then displayed in cross-case matrices to identify patterns of convergence and divergence between SMAN 1 Garut and SMKN 1 Garut. In the conclusion-drawing stage, meanings were interpreted holistically and verified through iterative comparison between empirical data and theoretical frameworks. This process led to the formulation of a five-stage model of internalization contextualization, reflective actualization, social habituation, inclusiveness–differentiation, and digital externalization each representing a developmental phase through which moderation values are embedded in students' daily lives based on the fulfillment of their psychological and social needs.

Ethical considerations were rigorously observed throughout the research. All participants received clear explanations regarding the purpose and procedures of the study and provided written informed consent. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, and official permissions were obtained from both schools and the Garut District Education Office. The researcher maintained a non-interventionist stance to ensure that the research process did not disrupt normal school activities. Ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice were upheld in every stage of the study to protect the rights and dignity of participants.

Through this methodological configuration, the study presents a replicable and transparent qualitative protocol for future researchers. Those seeking to replicate the research can conduct fieldwork in schools with similar socio-religious diversity, use purposive sampling to select key educational actors, employ the same three data-collection techniques, and analyze data using the Miles–Huberman–Saldaña interactive model. This rigorous yet flexible qualitative framework provides a practical blueprint for investigating how the fulfillment of students' basic psychological needs fosters the internalization of religious moderation values. Ultimately, this approach not only reveals the lived process of moderation education but also contributes a grounded methodological pathway for strengthening students' ideological resilience and moral awareness in the digital era.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Findings
1. Manifestations of Radicalism among Students

Field data from SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut revealed that radicalism among students rarely appears in overtly violent forms (*violent radicalism*), but manifests through symbolic radicalism, exclusive social interactions, and digital ideological exposure. Symptoms include avoidance of national symbols, labeling peers based on religious affiliation, and acceptance of narratives that delegitimize national ideology or pluralism. For instance, teachers reported students who questioned the flag ceremony as "non-Islamic" or who joined online religious groups promoting khilafah narratives.

This aligns with Moghaddam's *Staircase to Terrorism* model, where radicalization escalates psychologically when basic needs such as belonging,

recognition, and security are unmet. Students experiencing social exclusion or moral uncertainty tend to seek ideological certainty in closed online communities.

Hence, radicalization in these schools operates latently within the digital and symbolic domains rather than through physical aggression, confirming findings by Sarbini & Dulkiah (2023) that adolescent radicalism in Indonesia tends to be *non-violent but cognitively rigid*. This cognitive rigidity can manifest through the adoption of extremist ideologies, often influenced by social media and cultural factors, highlighting the need for comprehensive educational strategies. To effectively address this issue, educators must implement curricula that promote critical thinking and digital literacy, enabling students to navigate and challenge radical narratives.

2. The Process of Religious Moderation Internalization

The empirical findings demonstrated that internalization of religious moderation unfolds through an integrative, multi-layered process influenced by the school's leadership, teacher modeling, and student engagement. From thematic coding and cross-site triangulation, five interrelated stages were identified, forming a Five-Stage Maslow-Based Model:

a. Contextualization of Values : Moderation learning begins by relating Islamic principles to real-world plural contexts. PAI teachers use national and social issues (e.g., religious tolerance, online hate speech) as entry points for discussion, encouraging students to connect faith with citizenship.

b. Reflective Actualization : Students engage in dialogical reflection through debates, storytelling, and collaborative projects. This stage triggers internal self-awareness and moral reasoning, as students reinterpret religious values in light of empathy and social justice.

c. Social Habituation and Role Modeling: Teachers' consistent example and collective school rituals (morning prayers, interfaith greetings, teamwork projects) form the habit of inclusive behavior. Moderation becomes a normalized social practice.

d. Inclusiveness and Differentiation: Students learn to affirm both their faith identity and social diversity. They recognize that religious commitment coexists with tolerance for difference—reflecting Al-Qaradawi's *wasathiyah* principle of balance between firmness and flexibility.

e. Positive Digital Externalization: The final stage manifests when students produce and share peace-oriented digital content—memes, podcasts, or social campaigns. Through this, moderation transcends the classroom into online spaces, transforming digital engagement into moral agency.

This five-stage model was empirically grounded through data from both schools, showing progressive movement from *cognitive awareness* to *affective internalization* and *behavioral manifestation.*

3. Determinants of Successful Internalization

Five key determinants were found to significantly enhance the success of moderation internalization:

a. School Leadership Commitment: Both principals, Sumpena Permana (SMAN 1) and Pudji Santoso (SMKN 1), demonstrated inclusive leadership. They encouraged religious dialogue, protected minority students, and

embedded moderation into school culture. "Change must start from the top," noted Pudji Santoso, emphasizing leadership modeling as the moral compass for teachers and students.

b. Teacher Competence and Pedagogical Approach Teachers integrated reflection, problem-solving, and project-based learning into PAI classes, avoiding monologic preaching. They functioned as mentors facilitating value discovery rather than moral enforcers.

c. Peer Influence and Collaborative Learning: Peer-to-peer dialogue within extracurricular activities, like *Rohis* and Paskibra, played a pivotal role in shaping inclusive norms.

d. Family and Community Support: Parents who embraced plural values reinforced moderation at home, while external institutions like MUI, Kemenag, and Dinas Pendidikan provided workshops and interfaith forums strengthening students' exposure to tolerance.

e. Institutional Synergy: Collaboration between schools, government agencies, and civil religious organizations formed an ecosystem of value reinforcement. This synergy prevented extremist infiltration and supported consistent value reinforcement across domains.

4. Barriers and Challenges

Despite positive achievements, several obstacles were identified:

a. Internal Barriers: Some teachers lacked the reflective pedagogical skill to transform doctrinal content into contextual moral learning. Consequently, learning occasionally reverted to didactic preaching rather than dialogical formation.

b. External Barriers: The more serious threats emerged from digital and familial environments. Many students consumed online sermons from unverified preachers, displaying greater trust in digital influencers than school educators. Families adhering to exclusivist interpretations often reinforced ideological rigidity at home.

c. Digital Exposure: Radical narratives spread rapidly through social media and closed chat groups, accelerating symbolic radicalization. Limited religious digital literacy made students vulnerable to ideological manipulation

These findings echo prior reports from BNPT (2023) and Isabella & Nofrima (2024) that digital ecosystems now serve as the primary channels of youth radicalization. Furthermore, the increasing accessibility of digital platforms amplifies the risk of radicalization, particularly among youth who are the most active users of social media. The urgent need for enhanced digital literacy programs is crucial to mitigate these risks and empower young individuals to critically engage with online content.

5. The Impact of Moderation Internalization

The outcomes of value internalization were observed at three major levels:

a. Cognitive Impact: Students exhibited increased critical reasoning toward religious narratives, recognizing extremist discourse as manipulative. They began articulating moderation concepts independently during class discussions and online reflections.

b. Affective Impact: Emotional empathy and tolerance improved; students felt safer expressing religious diversity within the school environment.

c. Behavioral Impact: Collaborative projects and peer campaigns demonstrated that students acted as active peace-builders. Social media analysis revealed a decline in polarizing content shared by students after participation in moderation programs.

Overall, the process not only changed individual attitudes but also transformed the school ecosystem into a "resilient moral environment", where ideological infiltration found little space.

Analysis/Discussion

1. Linking Findings with Theoretical Constructs

The study reaffirms that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) continues to serve as a relevant analytical framework for interpreting the motivational foundations of students' religious moderation. Contemporary empirical research in moral and educational psychology substantiates this premise, emphasizing that satisfying fundamental psychological needs such as security, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization plays a pivotal role in shaping prosocial, tolerant, and cooperative behaviors. This correspondence implies that educators should focus on cultivating supportive learning environments that address these psychological dimensions, thereby enhancing both academic achievement and spiritual development among learners (Betts et al., 2022).

When educational institutions provide a psychologically safe and inclusive atmosphere, students tend to demonstrate higher levels of moral self-regulation, empathy, and reflective judgment (Mulvey et al., 2021). The interconnection between need fulfillment and moral maturity underscores the responsibility of schools to construct emotionally responsive pedagogical spaces. Conversely, when these needs are neglected, students become more susceptible to ideological rigidity and radical narratives, resonating with Moghaddam's (2005) "staircase to terrorism" and Kruglanski's (2018) Significance Quest Theory (SQT). Both frameworks reveal that diminished self-worth and unmet belonging often lead adolescents to seek meaning and affirmation within absolutist or extremist belief systems. Hence, ensuring that students' psychological needs are adequately addressed is essential to prevent the escalation of ideological vulnerability and to promote a culture of empathy, inclusion, and understanding.

Empirical evidence from SMAN 1 Garut and SMKN 1 Garut reflects this developmental pathway. Students who received acknowledgment and emotional affirmation from teachers and peers exhibited broader perspectives, emotional openness, and a more reflective orientation toward their faith. In contrast, those who experienced alienation or were exposed predominantly to rigid digital discourse sought moral certainty through doctrinaire online groups. These findings position the five-stage internalization model as a concrete application of both Maslow's motivational theory and Significance Quest Theory, illustrating that the process of internalizing moderation values begins when educational settings meet students' psychosocial and emotional needs.

Additionally, this pattern strengthens Hakam and Nurdin's (2012) notion of *transinternalization*, which posits that effective value internalization occurs through the integrated interaction of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions.

Parallel to the concept of *whole-person learning* advanced in contemporary educational research, the present study bridges humanistic psychology and Islamic pedagogical philosophy. It argues that religious moderation thrives when ethical formation is harmonized with the learner's natural developmental and existential needs (Faizi & Murtadho, 2025). In doing so, it not only deepens the learning experience but also nurtures a profound and contextually grounded understanding of moral and spiritual principles within the framework of Islamic education.

2. The Dynamics of Reflective and Social Learning

The study reveals that reflective dialogue and social habituation serve as the most influential mediators in the process of value internalization. This finding supports the core propositions of Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1986) while extending its application into the realms of moral, civic, and intercultural pedagogy. Recent scholarship in educational psychology demonstrates that dialogic learning, where students engage in open-ended questioning and collaborative meaning-making, substantially strengthens moral reflection, empathy, and perspective-taking (Syarifuddin et al., 2024). Such dialogical engagement does not merely promote critical and analytical thinking; it also equips students to respond constructively to the ethical complexities and pluralistic realities of modern society (Beaudoin & Goldin, 2014). Hence, dialogue-oriented religious education emerges as a critical pedagogical mechanism for nurturing the socio-cognitive foundations of moderation.

Teachers who demonstrate inclusiveness, fairness, and integrity in their interactions act as moral exemplars, embodying what contemporary social-cognitive frameworks refer to as *observational moral agency*. Within this study, teachers consistently modeled open dialogue, validated student reasoning, and contextualized religious lessons with contemporary social issues approaches that align with empirical findings showing that teacher discourse and classroom climate strongly influence adolescents' empathy, moral reasoning, and ethical judgment (Nurhakim, 2023). Cultivating such inclusive and dialogical classroom environments therefore contributes not only to moral growth but also to the development of emotional intelligence and social responsibility among students, reinforcing moderation as a lived ethical practice.

Furthermore, the process of social habituation observed in both schools reflects the idea of education as cultural cultivation, a concept increasingly echoed in contemporary discussions of school climate as moral ecology (Audley & Jovic, 2020). Regular collective activities such as communal prayers, collaborative service programs, and digital-based projects function as ritualized moral reinforcements that embed moderation within students' daily routines. Evidence from recent meta-analyses of peer-led interventions similarly indicates that positive peer modeling fosters prosocial attitudes, empathy, and intergroup solidarity (Wlodarczyk et al., 2021). These findings emphasize that establishing peer-centered, value-based communities can significantly enhance social cohesion and mutual respect, allowing educational spaces to evolve into microcosms of peaceful coexistence and ethical harmony.

3. Digital Moderation as a New Frontier

One of the most distinctive contributions of this research lies in the digital externalization stage, which redefines the landscape of Islamic religious education by

extending it beyond conventional classroom boundaries into the broader digital sphere. In today's networked society, online platforms have emerged as critical arenas for ideological negotiation and identity construction, particularly among Generation Z students who spend significant portions of their learning and social life online. Although social media algorithms often reinforce polarization and echo chambers, they simultaneously provide meaningful opportunities for the creation of counter-narratives that promote empathy, balance, and interreligious understanding when students are guided to become ethical and reflective digital agents (Mashudi & Hilman, 2024).

This stage operationalizes and extends Bandura's (2001) theory of *moral agency in mediated environments*, illustrating that moral self-regulation can be actualized within virtual contexts when learners are empowered to navigate and transform digital discourse responsibly. In both SMAN 1 and SMKN 1 Garut, students engaged in digital projects including thematic vlogs, infographic campaigns, and peace-oriented podcasts that encouraged them to reinterpret and recontextualize religious narratives into inclusive, pluralistic messages. Through this process, digital participation became not only a medium of expression but also a moral praxis, enabling students to embody religious moderation while engaging critically with contemporary issues.

This finding resonates with the evolving framework of digital-based Islamic religious education, which emphasizes student engagement, creativity, and spiritual understanding through interactive technology (Mashudi & Hilman, 2024). It also aligns with Utomo et al. (2024), who conceptualize *spiritual digital literacy* as a transformative strategy for Islamic education teachers to instill values of empathy, respect, and self-discipline amidst challenges such as online aggression and cyberbullying. In this view, the cultivation of digital moral awareness the ability to discern, reflect, and act ethically in online spaces becomes a core component of religious learning, bridging faith-based values with technological competence.

From the author's analytical perspective, the digital externalization phase marks a paradigm shift from traditional didactic teaching to a participatory, agency-driven model of religious education. It underscores the idea that moral formation in the digital era must not stop at literacy (knowing how to use technology) but advance toward digital empowerment (knowing how to use technology for good). By positioning students as moral agents within cyberspace, the learning process transforms from passive reception into active ethical engagement, allowing learners to construct meaning, resist ideological manipulation, and contribute to digital ecosystems grounded in compassion and justice.

This integration of moral education with digital engagement reimagines the role of schools as digital moral communities spaces where values are co-created, negotiated, and shared through technology. The researcher argues that this model represents a necessary evolution in Islamic education, particularly as it responds to the moral complexities of digital modernity. Rather than perceiving technology as a threat to religiosity, it becomes a *platform for the embodiment of moderation values—* a bridge between faith, reflection, and social responsibility.

4. Scientific Novelty and Contribution

The core originality of this research resides in the formulation of the Maslow-Based Integrative Model of Religious Moderation (MBIM-RM), which reimagines the

internalization of values not as a linear or instructional process but as an ecological, interactive, and developmental system. Distinct from conventional *transinternalization* frameworks that emphasize cognitive transmission, the MBIM-RM unites three interdependent theoretical traditions:

a. Maslow's hierarchy of motivation, which establishes the psychological foundation for the adoption and sustainability of moral and spiritual values;

b. Bandura's theory of social modeling, which elucidates the social-cognitive mechanisms underpinning behavioral formation and moral imitation; and

c. Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction, which situates value internalization within the institutional and cultural processes of habituation and legitimation.

By integrating these perspectives, the model interprets religious moderation not as a static moral attribute to be transmitted but as a multi-layered psychosocial ecosystem, continuously shaped through the interaction of human needs, interpersonal relationships, and socio-cultural environments. This orientation reflects the ecological paradigm of learning resilience discussed by *Wosnitza et al. (2018)*, who argue that resilience in education arises from reciprocal dynamics between individual motivation, social support, and environmental affordances. Similarly, moral education scholarship, such as *Murray et al. (2024)*, emphasizes that moral exemplarity and identity formation evolve through iterative engagement with both personal intentionality and contextual modeling, reinforcing the necessity of embedding ethical learning within authentic social contexts.

Through this synthesis, the MBIM-RM introduces a humanistic–Islamic hybrid model that is empirically grounded, theoretically coherent, and pedagogically adaptive. It bridges psychological motivation and socio-moral ecology, positioning religious moderation as an outcome of integrated personal growth and collective moral participation. This conceptual innovation enriches the discourse of Islamic education by providing a replicable and context-responsive framework through which educators can align moral development, social resilience, and motivational dynamics—ensuring that value internalization remains both sustainable and transformative across diverse educational settings.

5. Practical and Theoretical Implications

At the theoretical level, this research contributes to the evolving discourse on values-based and moral education, emphasizing that genuine value internalization occurs when learning addresses students' intrinsic psychological needs for *meaning, belonging,* and *self-efficacy*. As articulated by Syafika and Marwa (2024), sustainable moral formation must integrate global educational insights with local cultural realities, ensuring that ethical instruction speaks to learners' lived experiences. The findings of this study challenge the conventional, didactic tendencies within Islamic pedagogy that prioritize rote transmission of doctrine over personal moral construction. Instead, they call for a transformative pedagogical shift toward *learner-centered, need-responsive moral education,* where the development of faith and morality is grounded in human motivation and contextual understanding. This paradigm situates Islamic education within a broader framework of holistic learning anchored in the unity of intellect, emotion, and spirituality—thus aligning it with

contemporary movements toward global sustainability and moral resilience in education.

At the pedagogical level, the five-stage MBIM-RM model offers a concrete and systematic framework for teachers to facilitate moral learning through actionable phases—*contextual dialogue, reflective reasoning, social habituation, identity negotiation,* and *digital expression.* This structural design transforms abstract values into experiential learning processes that can be observed, assessed, and refined. As noted by Yunita and Mulyadi (2024), the effective integration of educational technology within Islamic pedagogy not only enhances engagement but also promotes deeper spiritual reflection through digital interactivity. In this sense, the MBIM-RM model advances a transformative and technologically adaptive pedagogy, reflecting international trends in social-emotional and humanistic learning. Teachers become facilitators of dialogue and co-creators of moral meaning rather than mere transmitters of knowledge, thereby fostering classrooms as dynamic communities of ethical inquiry and reflective action.

At the policy level, this study underscores the necessity of embedding psychosocial diagnostics and digital moral competencies into the national framework for *Penguatan Moderasi Beragama* (Religious Moderation Strengthening). Current educational transformations demand that PAI (Islamic Religious Education) and civic curricula not only cultivate doctrinal understanding but also equip students with emotional intelligence and ethical literacy for digital engagement. Global initiatives such as OECD's Learning Compass 2030 and UNESCO's Education for Peace and Global Citizenship advocate for similar models emphasizing self-awareness, empathy, and critical participation in digital ecosystems as essential outcomes of 21st-century moral education. By institutionalizing the MBIM-RM model within school policies, Indonesia can reinforce its position as a regional leader in moderation-based moral education, fostering ideological resilience, intercultural harmony, and adaptive citizenship that align with both national identity and global educational ethics.

From an analytical perspective, the integration of moral theory, psychosocial learning, and digital engagement within the MBIM-RM framework signifies a shift from isolated moral instruction to systemic moral ecology. This model redefines the school not only as a site of knowledge dissemination but also as a living ecosystem of values where ethical reasoning, social empathy, and digital literacy coalesce to nurture balanced, reflective, and resilient learners. Consequently, this approach provides policymakers, educators, and curriculum designers with an adaptable blueprint for cultivating moderation as a socio-moral competency, ensuring that Islamic education remains relevant, human-centered, and future-oriented.

6. Toward Future Inquiry

Future research should aim to empirically validate and expand the five-stage MBIM-RM model through rigorous mixed-method approaches. Quantitative studies particularly those employing structural equation modeling (SEM) could examine the causal linkages among key variables such as need fulfillment, reflective engagement, and behavioral manifestation of moderation. This approach would help confirm the internal coherence and predictive validity of the model across different educational contexts. Meanwhile, longitudinal investigations could assess the sustainability of value internalization over time, offering insights into how moral understanding

matures and stabilizes as students progress through their learning trajectories. Comparative and cross-cultural analyses, as emphasized by Kuswanto et al. (2023), would also be instrumental in testing the cultural adaptability and institutional scalability of the MBIM-RM framework across diverse socio-religious and educational landscapes. Such inquiries would reinforce the model's potential as a context-sensitive yet universally applicable tool for cultivating moderation values in Islamic education.

In parallel, digital ethnographic research should be employed to capture how students exercise moral agency within algorithmic environments, where digital engagement increasingly shapes moral behavior and identity. As Han et al. (2023) highlight, the integration of artificial intelligence and adaptive technologies in education presents both ethical challenges and pedagogical opportunities. Future studies could, therefore, explore how AI-driven tools such as moral chatbots, adaptive reflection platforms, and digital mentoring systems can be leveraged to foster self-regulated moral reasoning and digital ethics in line with Islamic values. This line of inquiry would bridge the gap between *technological innovation* and *spiritual formation*, ensuring that digital learning environments nurture, rather than dilute, ethical consciousness and religious moderation.

The long-term trajectory envisioned by this study the establishment of "Moderation Literacy Schools" represents a strategic response to the moral, technological, and cultural challenges of the 21st century. Such schools would not merely transmit doctrinal content but would institutionalize reflective, participatory, and digitally ethical ecosystems designed to internalize moderation as a lived value. This vision parallels contemporary movements in values-based and character-centered education, emphasizing collective reflection, intercultural understanding, and ethical use of technology (Kuswanto et al., 2023). Through this framework, Indonesia could emerge as a regional exemplar in moderation-based moral education, integrating Islamic humanism, pedagogical innovation, and digital ethics into a unified educational paradigm that addresses both local identity and global citizenship.

From an analytical perspective, this forward-looking agenda underscores the need for interdisciplinary collaboration between educators, technologists, and moral psychologists. The MBIM-RM model's adaptability to AI-supported environments provides fertile ground for design-based research that tests how algorithmic mediation affects moral perception, empathy, and self-efficacy in learners. By merging Islamic educational philosophy with emerging digital ethics, future research can illuminate pathways toward a more resilient, adaptive, and ethically grounded generation capable of embodying moderation not only in belief but also in digital conduct and civic responsibility.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Maslow-Based Integrative Model of Religious Moderation (MBIM-RM) effectively fulfills the objective of developing a comprehensive and replicable framework for internalizing religious moderation values within educational institutions. The model's foundation integrating Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Bandura's social learning theory, and Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory provides a coherent psychological and sociological basis for understanding how

moderation can evolve as a lived, dynamic process rather than a prescriptive doctrine. Through this integration, the MBIM-RM emphasizes that moderation emerges when students' basic psychological needs for safety, belonging, and recognition are satisfied, allowing them to engage reflectively, socially, and ethically within both physical and digital learning environments.

The research discoveries affirm that moderation can be cultivated through five interconnected stages contextualization, reflective reasoning, social habituation, inclusiveness-differentiation, and digital externalization. Each stage demonstrates that the internalization of values requires a balance between personal growth, social experience, and digital moral expression. The findings further reveal that digital moral engagement represents a new frontier for Islamic education, where the development of ethical agency in cyberspace becomes integral to the prevention of radicalism among Generation Z learners. These discoveries contribute not only to theoretical advancement but also to practical innovation, providing teachers, policymakers, and curriculum developers with a structured, adaptable framework for implementing moderation-based moral education.

In addressing the research objectives, this study demonstrates that the MBIM-RM model bridges the gap between human motivation and religious values, offering an ecological and humanistic approach to Islamic education that aligns local wisdom with global educational standards. By grounding religious moderation in psychological fulfillment and participatory learning, the model transforms schools into moral ecosystems that nurture empathy, critical reflection, and social harmony. The study thus contributes to the national goal of strengthening *Moderasi Beragama* and offers Indonesia a strategic framework for promoting tolerance and peace through education.

Future research is encouraged to empirically test and refine this model using mixed-method and longitudinal designs to explore causal relationships between psychological needs, moral reasoning, and behavioral transformation. Studies may also investigate how artificial intelligence and digital technologies can be utilized ethically to enhance moral agency and reflective learning, aligning with the emerging discourse on the pedagogical implications of AI in education. Moreover, comparative and cross-cultural investigations across different provinces or international contexts would strengthen the model's generalizability and cultural adaptability. These directions will ensure that the MBIM-RM continues to evolve as a sustainable, evidence-based framework for fostering religious moderation, digital ethics, and social resilience in future generations.

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