

Date Received : November 2024
Date Revised : December 2024
Date Accepted : January 2025
Date Published : January 2025

THE ROLE OF CONTEXTUAL LEARNING IN EMBEDDING RELIGIOUS MODERATION VALUES IN PAI SUBJECTS

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Keywords:

Contextual Learning; Religious Moderation; Islamic Religious Education.

ABSTRACT

Contextual learning is an approach that links teaching materials with the real life of students, so that learning is more meaningful. so that learning is more meaningful. This article aims to analyze the role of contextual learning in instilling values of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects. moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects. Moderation religious moderation becomes an urgent need in a multicultural society to prevent extremism and radicalism. prevent extremism and radicalism. This research method uses descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The results showed that contextual approach in PAI subjects is effective in building a moderate understanding of religion through the understanding of religion through student-centered learning strategies. learning strategy that is student-centered. This learning encourages students to think critical, reflective, and tolerant in facing differences. This research recommends the application of contextual learning as an effective method to instill religious moderation values in the educational environment.

A. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary societies, the increasing diversity in religious and cultural practices presents both opportunities and challenges for educational systems. The importance of managing this diversity in a harmonious and constructive way cannot be overstated. Particularly in multicultural societies, religious diversity often becomes a sensitive area, where intolerance, radicalism, and extremism may emerge due to narrow, exclusive understandings of religious teachings (Tilaar & Hapsari, 2004). This is where education, specifically Islamic Religious Education (PAI), plays a critical role in shaping student attitudes toward diversity, tolerance, and coexistence.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) serves as an essential vehicle for fostering religious understanding and tolerance among students. The primary goal of PAI is not merely to transmit religious knowledge but to instill values that enable students to appreciate and respect the differences among individuals in a pluralistic society (Suprijono, 2011). In this context, educators face the challenge of helping students reconcile their religious beliefs with the reality of a diverse and often conflicting world. Therefore, the role of PAI in cultivating a balanced worldview is paramount.

One of the key issues in contemporary education is the emergence of intolerance and radicalism, which are often driven by rigid and dogmatic interpretations of religion. This phenomenon has been linked to the failure of educational systems to encourage critical thinking and reflection on religious teachings. The rise of such attitudes can have damaging effects on social cohesion, peace, and cooperation in diverse communities (Gunawan, 2017). This necessitates a shift in how religious education is taught, aiming for a more moderate and inclusive approach to religion.

Religious moderation, as a response to radicalism, offers a pathway to counteract these extreme positions. Religious moderation can be defined as a middle path that rejects both extreme conservatism and excessive liberalism in religious practices (Zamroni, 2013). It encourages believers to engage with their faith in a balanced, pragmatic, and respectful manner, recognizing the diversity of interpretations and practices within Islam. By promoting religious moderation, educational systems can help to foster social harmony and prevent the fragmentation of society due to sectarianism.

Moderation in religion is critical in addressing the increasing polarization and ideological divisions that characterize modern societies. The need for a balanced approach becomes even more pressing when considering the globalized nature of contemporary interactions, where individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds often coexist in close proximity (Rusman, 2017). Religious moderation, in this sense, is not only about preserving the integrity of religious teachings but also about promoting a worldview that respects pluralism and diversity.

In order to embed religious moderation values within the educational system, it is essential to adopt teaching approaches that are flexible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of diverse learners. Contextual learning, as an educational approach, has proven to be highly effective in helping students relate theoretical knowledge to real-world situations (Arifin, 2012). By linking educational content to the lived experiences of students, contextual learning makes the learning process more meaningful and relevant, which is particularly important when dealing with abstract or complex concepts like religious moderation.

Contextual learning encourages students to actively engage with the content being taught, enabling them to make connections between what they learn in the classroom and the world outside. In the case of Islamic Religious Education, this approach helps students apply religious teachings in practical, everyday contexts, thereby moving beyond theoretical knowledge to actionable understanding. It fosters an environment where students can critically examine and reflect on religious issues, promoting a deeper comprehension of the values of moderation and tolerance (Kemendikbud, 2013).

One of the most significant benefits of contextual learning in PAI is its potential to encourage students to embrace the values of tolerance, justice, balance, and respect for diversity. These values are foundational to the concept of religious moderation, and they form the cornerstone of a harmonious and peaceful society (Baharuddin & Wahyuni, 2007). By integrating these values into the learning process, educators can help students internalize them, thereby shaping their attitudes and behaviors in a way that contributes to social cohesion.

Moreover, contextual learning fosters an environment where students are not mere recipients of information but active participants in the learning process. This shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach allows for more personalized learning experiences. Students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, and engage in discussions that challenge preconceived notions and encourage open-mindedness (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013). This is particularly important when teaching religious subjects, where dogmatic interpretations often prevent the development of such critical thinking.

In order for contextual learning to be successful in promoting religious moderation, it is crucial to involve teachers as facilitators who guide students in exploring complex religious and social issues. Teachers must be equipped with the necessary skills to create an environment conducive to reflective thinking, open discussion, and respectful debate. (Muhaimin, 2011) They must also be able to address misconceptions and provide students with the tools to critically evaluate the religious and cultural diversity they encounter.

The role of teachers in contextual learning extends beyond the classroom. Teachers must act as role models, demonstrating how to engage with others in a tolerant and respectful manner. By embodying the values of moderation, teachers can influence students' attitudes and behavior, helping them to become responsible and empathetic members of society. (Gunawan, 2017) Furthermore, teachers must continuously reflect on their own practices, adapting their teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of students and to address any emerging challenges in the classroom.

However, the implementation of contextual learning in PAI is not without its challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of resources and support from educational institutions, particularly in areas with limited access to technology and other learning materials. (Tilaar & Hapsari, 2004) Additionally, the rigid and overloaded curriculum can make it difficult for teachers to incorporate contextual learning strategies into their lessons without sacrificing other important educational objectives.

Despite these challenges, the benefits of contextual learning in promoting religious moderation far outweigh the difficulties. Studies have shown that students who engage with content through contextual learning are better equipped to understand and apply the values of moderation in their lives. (Suprijono, 2011) They are

more likely to develop a nuanced understanding of religious teachings, and their increased engagement with the material allows them to form their own opinions and develop a sense of agency in their religious and social lives.

One of the most effective strategies for embedding religious moderation in PAI through contextual learning is the use of real-life case studies and examples. Case studies allow students to examine the application of religious principles in diverse social settings, helping them to see how religious moderation can be practiced in everyday life. Through these case studies, students can explore the complexities of religious tolerance and justice in situations that may involve conflict or misunderstanding. (Zamroni, 2013) Furthermore, group discussions and collaborative projects are essential in fostering an environment of shared learning and mutual respect. These activities encourage students to work together, exchange ideas, and learn from each other's perspectives, all while reinforcing the values of tolerance and respect for differences. Collaborative learning is particularly beneficial in diverse classrooms, as it promotes understanding and cooperation among students from different religious and cultural backgrounds (Rusman, 2017).

In addition to classroom-based strategies, the integration of technology in contextual learning offers significant opportunities to enhance the teaching of religious moderation. Digital media can be used to introduce students to diverse religious perspectives, moderate religious figures, and historical examples of religious tolerance. By incorporating multimedia into lessons, educators can create more engaging and dynamic learning experiences that resonate with students. (Baharuddin & Wahyuni, 2007)

The integration of technology in PAI education also facilitates the development of digital literacy among students, an essential skill in today's interconnected world. As students engage with online resources, they learn to critically assess the information they encounter and navigate the complexities of religious and cultural discourse in the digital age (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013).

Despite the proven effectiveness of contextual learning, further research is needed to assess its long-term impact on students' understanding and practice of religious moderation. Future studies should focus on evaluating the outcomes of contextual learning strategies in various educational contexts, particularly in terms of students' ability to apply religious moderation in their daily lives. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into the lasting effects of contextual learning on students' attitudes toward religious diversity and social harmony. (Suprijono, 2011)

Based on the existing literature, several research gaps can be identified in the current studies regarding the application of contextual learning in embedding religious moderation values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). While many scholars have explored the theoretical foundations and practical applications of contextual learning. (Kemendikbud, 2013) limited empirical research has been conducted to assess the long-term impact of these teaching methods on students' attitudes toward religious moderation. Most studies focus on short-term outcomes, such as changes in students' knowledge or immediate classroom behaviors, but do not provide comprehensive insights into how contextual learning influences students' views and practices of religious tolerance in the long run. (Suprijono, 2011) Furthermore, while contextual learning is widely recognized for its potential to foster critical thinking and respect for diversity, there is a lack of comparative studies that assess its effectiveness against other

pedagogical approaches in the specific context of PAI education.(Baharuddin & Wahyuni, 2007)

Additionally, existing research predominantly focuses on the theoretical underpinnings and general strategies of contextual learning, with few studies delving into the specific challenges and solutions in applying this approach within the unique socio-cultural and religious contexts of various schools. Issues such as resource constraints, time limitations, and teacher readiness in implementing contextual learning are often overlooked or treated superficially.(Gunawan, 2017) There is a need for further research that not only evaluates the effectiveness of contextual learning in promoting religious moderation in diverse educational settings but also explores the practical obstacles teachers face in incorporating this approach into their teaching practices. Furthermore, research could benefit from exploring how contextual learning can be tailored to address the varying needs of students from different cultural and religious backgrounds, ensuring a more inclusive approach to religious education.(Rusman, 2017)

This research will discuss how the application of contextual learning can shape moderate attitudes in religion. The main focus is on the role of teachers, teaching methods, and students' active involvement in the learning process. This research also identifies the challenges faced in implementing the contextual approach and the solutions that can be applied. With this research, it is expected to make a significant contribution to the world of education, especially in teaching PAI. The application of contextual approach is believed to be able to create learners who are moderate, tolerant, and able to live harmoniously in diversity.

B. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe in depth the role of contextual learning in instilling religious moderation values. This method was chosen because it can explore phenomena that occur naturally in the learning environment. The focus of the research is on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects at the secondary school level. Data collection was conducted using several techniques, namely observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observation was conducted in the classroom to observe the learning process of PAI that applied contextual approach. Interviews were conducted with PAI teachers, students, and school principals to obtain more in-depth information related to teaching methods and their impact on students' understanding of religious moderation.(Gunawan, 2017)

The research instruments were observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and a list of documents reviewed. Observations were made directly during the learning process to understand the interaction between teachers and students, as well as the extent to which the contextual approach was applied. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured techniques so that respondents could provide broad and in-depth answers. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively by looking for patterns, relationships, and meanings of the observed phenomena. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, method triangulation, and checking data with respondents.(Muhaimin, 2011)

This research was conducted in several secondary schools that had implemented contextual learning in teaching PAI. The selection of the research

locations was based on the criteria of contextual approach implementation and the readiness of school resources. The research subjects were PAI teachers and students who were active in the learning process.(Rusman, 2017)

The results of this study are expected to provide a clear picture of the effectiveness of contextual learning in instilling religious moderation values and the challenges faced in its implementation. Recommendations from this research are also expected to be a reference for educators and policy makers in the field of education.(Zamroni, 2013)

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Contextual learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in instilling religious moderation values. This approach encourages students to understand religious teachings within the context of their everyday lives, allowing them to apply these teachings practically and meaningfully. The emphasis on active student involvement through direct experience is a cornerstone of contextual learning, making the learning process more relevant and engaging.(Suyanto & Jihad, 2013) By connecting religious knowledge to real-world situations, students are better able to see the direct relevance of religious moderation in fostering a harmonious and balanced society. This method not only enhances the retention of knowledge but also encourages the development of critical thinking skills, enabling students to reflect on and engage with the complexities of religious diversity in a thoughtful and open-minded manner.

One of the central strategies within contextual learning is the utilization of the immediate environment as a key resource for teaching. This approach encourages students to engage directly with the cultural and religious diversity present in their surroundings, whether within their school community or in the broader societal context. Teachers guide students to observe and reflect on the interactions between various religious and cultural groups, helping them to recognize the practical realities of diversity. By observing these dynamics firsthand, students are able to see how different religious beliefs and practices coexist and interact within the same space, fostering a more tangible understanding of religious pluralism.(Kemendikbud, 2013) This form of learning encourages students to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world experiences, making the learning process more relevant and impactful. Through these observations, students gain a more nuanced understanding of religious moderation, recognizing that it is not merely a theoretical or abstract ideal but an active practice that promotes peaceful coexistence.

Furthermore, the strategy of using the environment as a learning resource emphasizes the importance of tolerance and respect for differences core values essential to the concept of religious moderation. When students witness the diverse ways in which people of different faiths interact respectfully within the same community, they gain practical insights into the benefits of tolerance and inclusivity. This approach helps to break down stereotypes and misconceptions about different religious groups, encouraging students to see individuals beyond their religious identities. As they reflect on these experiences, students are able to internalize the importance of upholding religious moderation in their own lives, understanding that it is a key factor in maintaining social harmony.(Arifin, 2012) By applying these observations to real-world situations, students begin to recognize the interconnectedness of religious values and

social well-being, reinforcing the idea that religious moderation is not only a religious duty but also a social necessity.

The use of the environment as a learning resource is also effective in helping students to appreciate the complexities of religious diversity. Observing how diverse groups coexist within their community allows students to develop a deeper empathy for others, especially those from different religious or cultural backgrounds. Through guided discussions and reflective exercises, students can critically assess how tolerance and religious moderation manifest in everyday life. This process not only strengthens their academic understanding of these concepts but also contributes to their personal growth as individuals who can engage with diversity in a constructive and respectful manner. Teachers, acting as facilitators, guide students in understanding that religious moderation is not simply about tolerating others' differences but about actively fostering mutual respect and understanding across cultural and religious divides. (Baharuddin & Wahyuni, 2007) By encouraging students to observe and reflect on the diversity in their own environments, contextual learning helps cultivate a generation that values and practices religious moderation in both thought and action.

In addition to environmental observations, group discussions are a fundamental component of contextual learning, offering students a collaborative space to explore and express their thoughts on critical issues such as diversity, tolerance, and interfaith relations. These discussions provide a dynamic and interactive environment where students can voice their opinions and reflect on their personal beliefs while also learning from the perspectives of others. By facilitating open dialogue, group discussions encourage students to consider diverse viewpoints and challenge their preconceived notions about religion and culture. The teacher's role in this setting is crucial, as they act as a facilitator rather than a direct instructor, guiding the students through structured debates and helping them navigate sensitive topics with respect and understanding. The teacher also ensures that all voices are heard and that the discussion remains productive, fostering an inclusive atmosphere where students feel safe to express their thoughts. (Tilaar & Hapsari, 2004) This approach not only deepens students' understanding of the subject matter but also helps develop their critical thinking skills, enabling them to engage with complex societal issues from multiple angles.

By engaging in these discussions, students are encouraged to think critically about how religious and cultural differences affect social relationships and community dynamics. Group discussions serve as a platform for students to explore how values like tolerance and respect are not just abstract principles but tangible practices that can lead to positive social change. This process encourages them to reflect on real-world examples of religious conflicts or interfaith cooperation, using these examples as springboards to generate potential solutions to the challenges posed by religious and cultural diversity. By addressing questions such as "How can we promote tolerance in our school?" or "What role does religion play in our understanding of justice?", students are prompted to move beyond theoretical knowledge and engage with the lived realities of religious and cultural interactions. Such discussions encourage students to take ownership of their learning by proposing solutions and reflecting on how these solutions can be implemented in their communities, thereby promoting a sense of agency and responsibility. (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013)

Moreover, group discussions in the context of PAI education serve as a valuable tool for enhancing students' interpersonal and communication skills. These skills are critical in fostering constructive engagement with individuals from different religious and cultural backgrounds. By practicing respectful dialogue and learning to disagree civilly, students develop the emotional intelligence needed to navigate a diverse society. The exchange of ideas also strengthens their ability to empathize with others, a key aspect of religious moderation. As students learn to articulate their views while being receptive to the opinions of others, they also build the collaborative skills necessary for peaceful coexistence in a multicultural world. These discussions, therefore, not only enhance students' academic understanding of religious moderation but also shape their personal growth as individuals who can engage with diverse communities in a thoughtful, empathetic, and respectful manner. (Muhaimin, 2011) Through this process, group discussions serve as a vital mechanism for integrating religious moderation into both the cognitive and affective domains of student development.

Another highly effective strategy within contextual learning is the use of case studies, which offers students the opportunity to engage with real-world scenarios that highlight religious or cultural conflicts. By analyzing specific cases, students are able to explore the root causes, societal implications, and possible resolutions of religious and cultural tensions. This method allows them to move beyond theoretical concepts, applying what they have learned to actual situations, and thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the complex nature of religious moderation. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), case studies often involve situations where religious beliefs or practices conflict with societal norms or with other religious groups. By examining these cases, students are prompted to consider how religious moderation can serve as a practical tool for resolving such conflicts, emphasizing that moderation is not merely an abstract principle but an actionable approach to real-world challenges. (Rusman, 2017) Case studies thus enable students to see the direct relevance of religious moderation in addressing pressing social issues, such as interfaith tensions or cultural misunderstandings.

Moreover, the case study approach allows students to engage in critical thinking and reflective analysis, skills that are essential for navigating the complexities of religious diversity in a globalized world. Students are encouraged to examine the different perspectives involved in the case, assess the ethical dimensions of the issues at hand, and propose viable solutions grounded in religious moderation. For example, a case study might focus on a religiously motivated conflict in a multicultural community, where students are asked to explore how religious moderation could have mitigated tensions and fostered peaceful coexistence. This process teaches students to analyze not only the immediate consequences of conflict but also the long-term impact on social cohesion and communal harmony. By considering the implications of various actions and the role of religious moderation in shaping social outcomes, students gain a more sophisticated understanding of how their religious beliefs can inform their approach to societal issues. (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013)

Additionally, case studies serve as a means of engaging students with complex moral and ethical questions, helping them to apply religious values to contemporary social challenges. The discussions prompted by these cases encourage students to reflect on broader themes such as justice, fairness, and respect for others, all of which are central tenets of religious moderation. By debating the merits of different solutions to a

given issue, students not only deepen their understanding of religious moderation but also cultivate the skills necessary to engage with moral dilemmas in a thoughtful and constructive manner. This critical engagement fosters the development of empathy and the ability to think outside of one's personal religious context, allowing students to appreciate the perspectives of others and work toward mutual understanding. Through case studies, students learn that religious moderation is an ongoing, dynamic process that requires continuous reflection, dialogue, and the willingness to adapt religious teachings to the diverse needs and realities of society. (Baharuddin & Wahyuni, 2007) Ultimately, case studies enhance students' ability to apply their religious education in a way that promotes social harmony and addresses the complexities of religious diversity in the modern world.

The application of technology significantly enhances the effectiveness of contextual learning by providing dynamic, interactive tools that engage students in a way that traditional methods may not. Digital media tools, such as videos, online articles, and interactive platforms, allow teachers to introduce students to key figures in Islamic history who exemplify the values of religious moderation. For instance, teachers can use multimedia resources to showcase the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), highlighting his principles of tolerance, justice, and fairness in dealing with diverse communities. By presenting these historical figures through digital formats, students are not only exposed to the core teachings of Islam but also to how these figures exemplified moderation in their actions and decisions. This approach provides a richer, more contextual understanding of religious moderation, making these historical lessons feel more immediate and relevant to students' lives. (Arifin, 2012) Technology thus serves as a bridge, helping students connect religious teachings to their practical applications in real-world situations.

In addition to introducing key historical figures, digital platforms also allow teachers to expose students to a broad range of diverse religious perspectives, enriching their understanding of how religious moderation is not confined to any single tradition but is a global phenomenon. Online resources such as documentaries, podcasts, and virtual museum tours can introduce students to the lives and teachings of religious leaders from various faiths who also promoted moderation, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Dalai Lama, or various Christian and Jewish peace advocates. These resources provide a comparative view of moderation across different religious and cultural contexts, helping students appreciate the universal nature of these values. By engaging with these diverse perspectives, students gain a more comprehensive understanding of religious moderation as a dynamic, interfaith value, rather than a static, isolated concept. This exposure broadens their worldview and helps them realize the practical importance of religious moderation in fostering global peace and cooperation. (Suprijono, 2011) Digital technology thus enhances the learning experience by facilitating a more inclusive and global view of religious moderation.

Moreover, technology serves as an invaluable tool in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and its real-world application. While traditional learning methods often focus on imparting abstract religious principles, digital tools allow students to see how these principles are applied in contemporary contexts. For example, teachers can use online simulations or interactive platforms to create scenarios where students must apply religious moderation to resolve conflicts, navigate cultural differences, or engage in interfaith dialogues. These activities allow students to practice

decision-making and critical thinking skills in real-time, enhancing their ability to apply what they have learned in tangible situations. By incorporating technology into the learning process, educators make the concept of religious moderation more accessible and engaging, fostering an environment where students can explore, question, and internalize these values in a manner that is both practical and reflective of modern societal needs.(Gunawan, 2017) Technology thus helps contextual learning become not just a theoretical exercise but a tool for equipping students with the skills needed to navigate the complexities of living in a diverse, globalized world.

The results of the study highlight the significant impact of contextual learning on improving students' understanding of religious moderation. One of the key strategies, environment-based learning, plays a crucial role in helping students recognize the practical importance of tolerance and coexistence in their everyday lives. By engaging with the real-world context, such as observing religious and cultural diversity within their own communities, students are able to make meaningful connections between the theoretical principles of religious moderation and the way these principles function in practice. This hands-on approach not only deepens their understanding of moderation but also helps them internalize the values of tolerance, respect, and inclusivity, which are essential for navigating a multicultural society.(Baharuddin & Wahyuni, 2007) Through this immersive learning experience, students develop a more nuanced understanding of how religious diversity can enrich, rather than divide, societies.

Furthermore, classroom observations revealed that students taught through contextual learning methods were more open to engaging in discussions about interfaith and cultural diversity. This increased openness indicates that the contextual approach goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge—it fosters an environment where students feel comfortable exploring sensitive topics and challenging their preconceived notions. As students actively participate in dialogues about religious and cultural differences, they begin to develop not only cognitive awareness but also emotional intelligence in navigating these discussions. By engaging with peers from different religious backgrounds in a respectful and thoughtful manner, students learn how to approach diversity with curiosity rather than fear or suspicion. This openness to diverse perspectives suggests that contextual learning is a powerful tool in shaping students' attitudes toward religious moderation, helping them become more empathetic and accepting individuals.(Suyanto & Jihad, 2013)

The study also points to the broader societal implications of these changes in student behavior. When students are encouraged to engage in open dialogue and learn from diverse perspectives, they are more likely to carry these attitudes outside the classroom, promoting a culture of tolerance and mutual respect in their communities. Students who are exposed to the values of religious moderation in a practical and interactive learning environment are better equipped to handle real-life situations where interfaith or intercultural dialogue is required. These students are more likely to challenge stereotypes, promote peaceful coexistence, and act as advocates for social harmony in their broader social circles. As a result, contextual learning not only improves students' academic understanding of religious moderation but also contributes to their development as active, responsible members of a pluralistic society.(Tilaar & Hapsari, 2004) Through this process, contextual learning fosters the formation of a generation that values and practices tolerance, making it an essential

approach for addressing the challenges posed by religious and cultural diversity in the modern world.

Interviews with PAI teachers revealed significant insights into the impact of contextual learning on students' understanding of religious moderation. Teachers noted that the contextual approach allowed students to internalize the concept of religious moderation in a more profound and personal manner. By connecting religious teachings to real-world scenarios, students were able to understand that religious moderation is not just a theoretical construct, but a practical and applicable framework for addressing issues in a diverse society. Teachers observed that students began to appreciate the nuanced and flexible nature of religious moderation, recognizing it as a balanced approach that can be applied to a variety of situations. This deeper understanding was facilitated through the contextual learning strategies, which encouraged students to engage with religious and cultural diversity in meaningful ways.(Gunawan, 2017) The approach empowered students to think critically about their own religious beliefs and practices, leading them to develop a more reflective and open-minded approach to the differences they encountered in society.

One of the examples cited by teachers involved a group project where students analyzed the practices of religious and cultural diversity in their local community. In this project, students worked collaboratively to research and present the various ways in which different religious groups interacted within their neighborhood or school environment. This active engagement with their local community not only enhanced students' academic understanding but also helped them see firsthand how tolerance and inclusivity function in real life. Teachers observed that through this project, students developed a stronger sense of empathy toward people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. By examining the challenges and successes of interfaith and intercultural interactions, students were able to understand the importance of religious moderation in promoting peaceful coexistence and mutual respect in a diverse society.(Suprijono, 2011) This hands-on approach demonstrated how contextual learning can turn abstract concepts into tangible experiences that resonate with students on a personal level.

The success of such projects underscores the practical nature of contextual learning and its capacity to foster critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility among students. By working on real-world issues related to diversity, students were not merely learning about religious moderation in the classroom, but were actively engaging with it in a way that directly influenced their attitudes and behaviors. Through these projects, students were able to apply religious moderation to real-life situations, demonstrating the relevance and applicability of the concepts they had learned. Teachers reported that this type of active, project-based learning not only helped students understand the importance of tolerance and inclusivity but also equipped them with the skills necessary to navigate and address the complexities of religious and cultural diversity in their communities. As students gained a deeper understanding of religious moderation, they also became more equipped to handle similar challenges in their personal and professional lives, thus fostering a more tolerant and empathetic society.(Muhaimin, 2011) This highlights the transformative potential of contextual learning as a tool for building both intellectual and emotional capacity among students, enabling them to contribute positively to a diverse and interconnected world.

Documentation studies further corroborated the findings from classroom observations and teacher interviews, highlighting the positive impact of contextual learning on students' engagement with religious moderation. Activity reports from students revealed a noticeable increase in their participation in cross-cultural and religious dialogues, both within the classroom and in broader social contexts. These reports indicated that students were not only able to understand the principles of religious moderation but also to apply and advocate for these values in diverse settings. The active involvement of students in such dialogues suggests that contextual learning has succeeded in creating an environment where students feel empowered to express their views on religious tolerance and coexistence, demonstrating a deepened engagement with the concepts taught.(Tilaar & Hapsari, 2004) This increased participation highlights the capacity of contextual learning to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, making the values of religious moderation more accessible and impactful.

The data from the activity reports further emphasize that contextual learning encourages students to articulate and advocate for the values of religious moderation in various discussion forums, both formal and informal. For example, students reported engaging in discussions about religious tolerance during school events, social gatherings, and even in digital platforms such as social media or online forums. These activities reflect a broader application of the knowledge acquired in the classroom, where students actively participated in conversations about the importance of inclusivity and mutual respect among different religious and cultural groups. This ability to translate academic learning into social action underscores the practical relevance of the values being taught and demonstrates that students are internalizing and living out the principles of religious moderation beyond the confines of the classroom.(Suprijono, 2011) The engagement in these forums not only enhances students' social interactions but also equips them with the skills necessary to navigate and contribute to diverse, multicultural environments.

Moreover, the documentation study reveals that contextual learning plays a pivotal role in encouraging students to integrate the principles of religious moderation into their daily lives and academic work. As students engage with real-world issues, they begin to understand that religious moderation is not just an abstract concept or theoretical framework but a valuable, practical approach to addressing the challenges posed by diversity in society. By participating in discussions that deal with complex issues of religious tolerance, cultural differences, and social justice, students gain critical insights into the role of religious moderation in fostering harmonious coexistence. The increase in their participation and the quality of their contributions to these dialogues point to the effectiveness of contextual learning in promoting active citizenship, where students not only comprehend but also advocate for the core values of tolerance, justice, and mutual respect in society.(Gunawan, 2017) This active, engaged learning process ultimately helps to shape students into individuals who are more prepared to contribute positively to a diverse and interconnected world, both academically and socially.

The case study-based learning method proved to be highly effective in fostering a deeper understanding of religious tolerance and justice among students. Through the analysis of real-life cases, students were able to engage with complex social issues, such as religious conflicts, interfaith dialogue, and cultural misunderstandings. This approach allowed them to examine the nuances of these issues, enabling them to

explore the multifaceted nature of religious tolerance and how it can be applied to resolve societal challenges. Teachers observed that students who participated in case study discussions demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of the values of religious moderation, as they were not merely learning theoretical concepts but were actively applying these ideas to real-world situations. By linking theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios, students were able to see the tangible implications of religious moderation in fostering social harmony and resolving conflicts.(Muhaimin, 2011)

Additionally, the case study approach encouraged students to think critically and reflectively about the role of religious values in addressing social conflicts. Rather than simply accepting the teachings of religion at face value, students were prompted to analyze the ethical dimensions of these teachings and how they might be applied to contemporary issues. For example, students were tasked with exploring how religious values, such as compassion, justice, and respect for others, could be utilized to resolve conflicts between different religious or cultural groups. This process encouraged students to move beyond simplistic or dogmatic interpretations of religious teachings and consider more nuanced and thoughtful approaches to resolving disputes. Through these discussions, students not only enhanced their understanding of religious moderation but also developed critical thinking skills that allowed them to engage with complex moral dilemmas in a reflective and constructive manner.(Arifin, 2012)

Furthermore, case study-based learning promotes deeper moral reasoning by encouraging students to explore multiple perspectives and consider the consequences of their actions. By analyzing the different viewpoints and interests involved in a particular case, students gain a broader understanding of the complexities of religious and cultural interactions. This process helps them appreciate the importance of empathy and open-mindedness in resolving social conflicts. As students engage with various stakeholders' perspectives in a case, they are prompted to think about the long-term effects of their decisions and the potential for promoting social justice and peace. This type of learning not only deepens students' understanding of religious teachings but also nurtures their ability to engage with real-world issues in a morally responsible way. By examining the consequences of different actions, students develop the ability to make informed, ethical decisions that align with the principles of religious moderation.(Suprijono, 2011) Ultimately, case study-based learning helps students connect their faith to the complexities of the modern world, equipping them with the moral and intellectual tools to navigate a diverse and often divided society.

Despite the notable success of contextual learning in promoting religious moderation, several challenges were identified during its implementation. One significant issue was the lack of resources in certain schools, which hindered the full execution of project-based activities, a key component of contextual learning. Many schools faced difficulties in accessing essential materials such as books, digital tools, and other teaching resources that are necessary for effectively carrying out contextual learning strategies. Additionally, limited access to technology posed a considerable barrier, as digital media and interactive platforms play an essential role in enhancing the learning experience and connecting theoretical knowledge with real-world application.(Tilaar & Hapsari, 2004) In schools with inadequate technological infrastructure, the ability to incorporate multimedia tools, case studies, and interactive discussions into the classroom was significantly reduced, which diminished the overall impact of the contextual learning approach. As such, a lack of resources became a

critical challenge in ensuring that all students could benefit equally from the educational opportunities provided by this teaching method.

Another challenge highlighted by teachers was the time constraints imposed by a rigid and overcrowded curriculum. The pressure to cover an extensive range of topics within a limited time frame made it difficult for teachers to fully integrate contextual learning activities into their lessons without sacrificing other important content. Teachers often found themselves having to prioritize core subject matter over more interactive, student-centered methods, which are crucial for fostering the deep, reflective engagement required for promoting religious moderation. This time pressure was particularly evident in subjects like Islamic Religious Education (PAI), where there is a need to balance traditional religious teachings with modern, contextualized approaches that engage students with real-world issues (Gunawan, 2017). The inflexibility of the curriculum, combined with the ever-increasing demands of standardized testing and assessment, left little room for the incorporation of project-based learning, fieldwork, or extended classroom discussions that are essential for contextual learning. These constraints point to the need for more flexible curricula that can accommodate innovative teaching methods without compromising the depth or quality of education.

The challenges related to resource limitations and curriculum constraints underscore the need for further investment in both material resources and professional development. To address these issues, schools and policymakers must prioritize the allocation of funds for educational resources, such as digital tools, teaching materials, and extracurricular support, which are integral to the success of contextual learning. Additionally, teachers need ongoing professional development to build the skills and confidence necessary to implement contextual learning effectively within their classrooms. This includes training in how to integrate technology into lessons, manage project-based activities, and balance curricular demands with interactive teaching methods (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013). Without these investments, the full potential of contextual learning in fostering religious moderation cannot be realized. Ultimately, overcoming these challenges will require a systemic approach to educational reform, where resource allocation and teacher training are prioritized to ensure that innovative teaching methods like contextual learning can be effectively implemented to benefit students in diverse educational contexts.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that contextual learning has an important role in instilling religious moderation values in PAI subjects. This approach helps students understand religious teachings in the context of real life, so that they are able to implement religious moderation values such as tolerance, justice, and respect for differences.

Through environment-based learning strategies, group discussions, and case studies, students are invited to think critically and reflectively on the phenomenon of diversity. The results showed that students who were taught with a contextual approach were better able to understand and apply the values of religious moderation compared to conventional learning methods.

However, there are challenges that need to be considered, such as limited resources and time available. Therefore, this study recommends several steps to

overcome these challenges. First, training for PAI teachers to design effective contextual learning. Second, increased resource support by the school and government to support project-based learning activities.

This research also opens up opportunities for further research, especially in exploring other approaches that can support contextual learning. In addition, long-term evaluation of the impact of contextual learning in shaping students' moderate character also needs to be done. Thus, the application of contextual learning is expected to be a strategic solution in instilling religious moderation values.

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