

RESEARCH

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# Challenges Faced by Instructors in Implementing Non-Formal Islamic Religious Education Integrated with Religious Moderation in Suro Bali Village, Ujan Mas Sub-District, Kepahiang Regency

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## Abstract

This study investigates the challenges faced by non-formal Islamic education instructors in integrating religious moderation (moderasi beragama) values at the village level. Conducted in Suro Bali Village, Ujan Mas Sub-district, Kepahiang Regency — a unique community where Muslim and Hindu residents coexist harmoniously — this research employs a descriptive qualitative approach through observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with 17 students and 3 instructors. The findings reveal that non-formal Islamic Education (PAI) in Suro Bali is implemented through a textual-contextual approach that connects Quranic teachings with local social realities. However, instructors face significant internal problems, including limited methodological competence in teaching moderation creatively, psychological burdens in maintaining narrative neutrality, and dual-role workloads as community figures. External challenges include a lack of contextual teaching modules relevant to the local multicultural setting, minimal digital infrastructure, and insufficient institutional support in the form of structured training for non-formal instructors. Despite these constraints, instructors independently improvise using local wisdom as instructional media, maintain personal dialogue with Hindu religious leaders, and develop digital literacy as a counter-narrative to intolerant content on social media. This study recommends structured capacity-building programs for non-formal Islamic education instructors in religiously diverse rural areas.

**Keywords:** Educational Challenges; Instructors; Non-formal Islamic Education; Religious Moderation; Suro Bali Village.

## Introduction

Non-formal Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI), as practiced in institutions such as Quranic Learning Centers (TPQ) and Islamic study circles (Majelis Taklim), plays a strategic role in shaping community character, particularly in instilling the values of religious moderation. In an era of increasing polarization, moderation is no longer optional, it is a societal imperative for preserving national harmony.

Suro Bali Village in Ujan Mas Sub-district, Kepahiang Regency, represents a unique and critical context. The village is widely recognized as a symbol of tolerance, where Muslim and Hindu communities have coexisted harmoniously for decades. This harmonious coexistence reflects what Aflahah, Nisa, & Aldeia (2023) describe as the strategic role of education in strengthening religious moderation in multicultural societies, where formal and non-formal educational institutions serve as key pillars for sustaining interfaith harmony. However, implementing a PAI curriculum integrated with religious moderation values in this setting poses distinct challenges for instructors.

Instructors are expected not merely to teach Islamic law in a textual sense, but also to contextualize tolerance values so as to prevent social friction. As Sihono & Cahyo (2024) argue, strengthening religious moderation through Islamic Religious Education values requires teachers to go beyond doctrinal transmission and actively demonstrate balanced religious attitudes in daily interactions. In practice, they frequently encounter obstacles: the absence of specific teaching modules, inadequate methodological training in moderation pedagogy, and the psychological burden of maintaining communal harmony in a heterogeneous village. These challenges are compounded by the generally dual-role nature of non-formal Islamic education instructors in rural areas, who often simultaneously serve as community leaders, farmers, or local government officers.

The integration of religious moderation values into non-formal PAI curricula has become both a challenge and an urgent need at the national level (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Religious moderation understood as balancing religious practice to avoid extremism, has been adopted as a national agenda to maintain interfaith harmony and prevent the spread of radical or intolerant ideologies (Aziz, 2020). Despite policy emphasis, the implementation gap between ideal frameworks and ground-level realities in rural non-formal educational institutions remains significant (Nurdin, 2021). This gap is further problematized by Chotimah, Qudsy, & Yusuf (2025), who identify a phenomenon of "superficial implementation" of religious moderation in Islamic educational management, where policies are adopted symbolically without substantive pedagogical transformation at the grassroots level.

Previous research has documented related challenges. Fahrudin (2019) noted that non-formal institutions often lack the resources and institutional support to promote Islamic inclusivity. Suhendri (2021) found that Islamic education teachers in heterogeneous environments face methodological and conceptual limitations in teaching moderation. Extending this line of inquiry, Masturin (2022) emphasizes that the development of Islamic religious education materials based on religious moderation requires systematic curriculum design rather than ad-hoc teacher initiatives, a condition rarely met in non-formal settings. Similarly, Muhaemin, Rusdiansyah, Pabbajah, & colleagues (2023) demonstrate that religious moderation in Islamic religious education faces structural resistance when institutional cultures prioritize doctrinal orthodoxy over contextual pedagogy. However, few studies have specifically examined the intersection of instructor challenges, local multicultural contexts, and non-formal educational settings particularly in villages with a significant non-Muslim population such as Suro Bali.

This study therefore aims to: (1) describe the form of non-formal PAI implementation integrated with religious moderation values in Suro Bali Village; (2) identify the internal problems (competence, comprehension, workload) faced by instructors; (3) analyze the external challenges (facilities, environmental support, availability of materials) that impede the teaching of religious moderation; and (4) examine the strategies employed by instructors to overcome these obstacles.

## Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative field research design (Moleong, 2017). This

approach is suited to understanding complex social and educational phenomena in their natural setting, specifically the implementation of non-formal Islamic Religious Education (PAI) integrated with religious moderation values in a multicultural rural village. Data were collected holistically and contextually, meaning the researcher sought a comprehensive picture of the educational setting while attending to the various contextual factors social, cultural, and institutional, that shape teaching practices.

### Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in Suro Bali Village, Ujan Mas Sub-district, Kepahiang Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia, from May 16 to November 16, 2025. This location was purposively selected based on its unique demographic character: Suro Bali is a transmigration village inhabited by multiple ethnic groups and religious communities, including Muslim and Hindu residents. Although the majority of residents in Ujan Mas Sub-district are Muslim, Suro Bali specifically has a notable Hindu population alongside other faiths (Islam, Catholicism, and Buddhism). This religious and ethnic diversity makes the village an ideal living laboratory for studying how non-formal Islamic education can be conducted while upholding tolerance and moderation values, a context that prior research has recognized as exemplary in interfaith coexistence (Pemerintah Desa Suro Bali, 2025).

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. Table 1 presents the profile of research participants.

**Table 1** Profile of Research Participants

Category	Number	Role in Study	Data Collection Technique
Non-formal PAI Instructors (Ustaz/Ustazah)	3	Primary informant	In-depth interview, observation
Student (Santri)	17	Secondary informant	In-depth interview
Community & Religious Leaders	As needed	Supporting informant	Interview, documentation
Documents & Archives	Multiple	Data source	Documentation

### Data Collection

Data were collected through three complementary techniques, applied simultaneously during the six-month fieldwork period to enable triangulation.

(1) Observation. Direct, non-participatory observation was conducted at non-formal Islamic education venues (TPQ and Majelis Taklim) in Suro Bali Village. The researcher observed teaching sessions, community interactions, and village life relevant to the research focus (Nazir, 1988). Field notes recorded both enabling and constraining contextual factors.

(2) In-depth Interviews. Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted using a structured interview guide developed by the researcher (Afifuddin et al., 2009). Interviews captured informants' opinions, feelings, and experiences relating to the implementation of religious moderation in non-formal Islamic education. Clarification probes were used to deepen understanding of specific phenomena where needed.

(3) Documentation. Administrative documents, activity records, photographs, and the official village monograph were collected and analysed (Arikunto, 1998). Documents were classified into: (a) official documents institutional letters, decrees, and activity reports; and (b) unofficial documents personal notes and informal records providing contextual information about specific events.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive qualitative model comprising three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Moleong, 2017). During data reduction, raw field data were systematically condensed and coded around the four research questions. Data were then displayed in narrative descriptions and thematic matrices to identify patterns across informant groups and data sources. Conclusions were drawn iteratively and verified through member checking with key informants. Trustworthiness of the findings was established through four criteria, as detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2** Trustworthiness criteria and procedures applied in this study

Criterion	Procedure Applied	Implementation in This Study
Credibility	Triangulation of source and methods; member checking	Data cross-checked across instructors, students, and community leaders via observation, interview, and documentation; key findings verified with informants
Transferability	Thick, detailed description of research context	Detailed description of village context, participant characteristics, and institutional setting provided to support reader judgment of applicability
Dependability	Audit trail; systematic documentation of research process	All field notes, interview transcripts, and documentary evidence systematically archived and referenced throughout the study
Confirmability	Reflexivity; transparent reporting of researcher positionality	Researcher's background as an Islamic education academic acknowledged; all interpretations grounded in raw data with illustrative evidence

## Results

### Implementation of Non-Formal Islamic Education Integrated with Religious Moderation in Suro Bali Village

Non-formal Islamic education in Suro Bali Village is not merely a knowledge transfer process but a systematic effort to sustain social harmony in a religiously diverse community. The research identified four key pillars of implementation:

First, the internalization of tolerance values (*tasamuh*) through a textual-contextual approach. Instructors teach Quranic verses textually while also contextualizing their meaning. For example, when explaining the concept of *akidah*, instructors use the Quranic injunction *Lakum Dinukum Waliyadin* as a foundation, while simultaneously explaining that doctrinal difference does not prevent social cooperation (*muamalah*) with Hindu neighbors. This integrated approach aligns with what Mala & Hunaida (2023) identify as the unifying potential of religious moderation in Islamic education, where textual fidelity and social inclusivity are positioned as complementary rather than contradictory educational goals. This practice aligns with the principle of *I'tidal* (justice) in religious moderation (Shihab, 2019).

Second, a social-reality-based curriculum (Social-Based Curriculum). Unlike rigid formal schooling, the TPQ and Majelis Taklim in Suro Bali use daily Muslim-Hindu interactions as primary teaching material. Instructors leverage communal events such as village clean-up activities (*gotong royong*) and local celebrations as practical laboratories for tolerance.

Third, the instructor as a central agent of moderation (Agent of Moderation). In a context saturated by extremist or intolerant content on social media, the instructors of Suro Bali serve as counter-narrative figures, emphasizing that being a good Muslim means being a good neighbor to Hindu residents, a strategy called "Moderation by Example" (*Moderasi Berbasis Keteladanan*).

Fourth, the integration of national loyalty values (*muwathanah*) within a local framework. Instructors affirm the legitimacy of local customs and integrate them with Islamic values, teaching students that preserving communal harmony in Suro Bali is itself an act of worship and patriotism.

Overall, the implementation model in Suro Bali represents a bottom-up moderation approach, driven by practical community need rather than top-down curriculum mandates. *Wasathiyah* (middle-way) values are embedded naturally into foundational religious content.

### **Internal Problems Faced by Instructors**

Internal problems refer to constraints arising from within the instructors themselves, including their professional capacity and personal disposition. In the context of Suro Bali with its high level of religious heterogeneity, these internal challenges are particularly pronounced.

(1) **Methodological Competence Constraints.** Most non-formal PAI instructors in Suro Bali are graduates of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) or local religious figures with strong substantive knowledge of Islam, but limited pedagogical skills. They are capable of explaining Islamic jurisprudence textually, yet struggle to translate moderation values into engaging and transformative learning activities. Riyawi & Febriansyah (2023) similarly found that the urgency of religious moderation in Islamic education is often undermined by teachers' inability to translate moderation principles into developmentally appropriate learning activities. This pedagogical deficit is compounded by what Ihsan, Zuhri, Annas, Noor, & colleagues (2024) term "curriculum management gaps" in *pesantren*-based madrasahs, where non-formal instructors lack systematic training in moderating extremist narratives while preserving Islamic identity. Government-prescribed moderation frameworks (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019) are often not fully understood or applied in practice.

(2) **Conceptual and Contextual Comprehension Problems.** Instructors face internal tension between upholding doctrinal purity and practicing broad tolerance. There is a recurring concern that being 'too moderate' may blur the boundaries of Islamic creed. For example, instructors are often uncertain how to set clear but respectful limits regarding Muslim participation in social activities related to Hindu religious celebrations. While they understand Islam as *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (a blessing for all creation), they frequently lack practical references for navigating these boundaries without appearing exclusive.

(3) **Workload and Time Management.** Non-formal PAI instructors in rural areas typically hold multiple roles simultaneously. In Suro Bali, a Quran teacher (*guru ngaji*) commonly also serves as a village official, farmer, or community leader responsible for funerals, weddings, and communal prayers. This severely limits the time available to prepare structured lesson plans or seek new references on moderation pedagogy.

(4) **Psychological Burden.** Teaching in a village known as a symbol of interfaith harmony creates additional mental pressure. Instructors feel responsible for maintaining Suro Bali's historical reputation for tolerance. There is constant anxiety that a single misstatement in class could offend non-Muslim residents or be perceived as ideologically weak by more conservative community members.

### **External Problems Hindering the Teaching of Religious Moderation**

External problems concern factors beyond the instructors' personal control that directly impede effective moderation education.

(1) **Inadequate Physical Facilities.** Non-formal educational institutions in Suro Bali lack basic teaching infrastructure. The absence of projectors, computers, and reliable internet access limits instructors to chalk-and-talk methods. Overcrowded and age-mixed learning spaces further hinder interactive methods such as group discussion or social simulation exercises.

(2) Absence of Contextual Teaching Modules. The majority of available teaching materials focus exclusively on Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and Quran literacy. There are no purpose-built modules that guide instructors on how to embed moderation values into daily lessons particularly for young children at the TPQ level, where abstract concepts require age-appropriate, illustrated storytelling formats.

(3) Insufficient Programmatic Support from Relevant Institutions. Non-formal education remains structurally underprioritized. Moderation training workshops rarely reach village-level non-formal instructors, as they are typically held at the sub-district level or directed at civil-servant teachers. There is no routine supervisory or mentoring system specifically for non-formal Islamic education in Suro Bali.

(4) Influence of Digital and Social Media Environments. Students in Suro Bali have unrestricted access to social media platforms (YouTube, TikTok) that frequently disseminate rigid, exclusive, or inflammatory religious content. Hanif, Syarifudin, & colleagues (2025) comprehensively analyze this challenge, noting that the integration of religious moderation in Islamic education during the digital era presents both unprecedented challenges and opportunities, as algorithmic amplification of extremist content often outpaces teachers' counter-narrative efforts. Similarly, Ridho, Muhlis, Lailaturrohmah, & colleagues (2025) argue that social polarization exacerbated by digital platforms demands the integration of religious moderation into Islamic curricula to strengthen inclusive religious literacy. Instructors find it difficult to counter the speed and appeal of such content, resulting in situations where moderation lessons taught in class are undermined by what students later consume online.

(5) Limited Operational Funding. Non-formal educational institutions in the village rely largely on voluntary community contributions. This restricts educational activities to indoor settings, preventing enriching experiential activities such as inter-faith community visits or tolerance camps that could more concretely reinforce moderation values.

### **Strategies Employed by Instructors to Overcome Challenges**

Despite the significant constraints described above, instructors in Suro Bali have independently devised creative and pragmatic strategies to ensure that moderation education continues effectively.

(1) Maximizing Exemplary Conduct (Uswah Hasanah). In the absence of formal moderation modules, instructors turn to the oldest and most proven method: personal example. This strategy resonates with Aziz & Huda's (2024) study on the contribution of Islamic universities to mosque-based non-formal Islamic education in Lombok, which found that exemplary conduct by instructors remains the most effective vehicle for moderation values in resource-limited settings. Likewise, Rivngatin (2025) emphasizes that Islamic Religious Education as a basis for strengthening religious moderation in multicultural societies must prioritize embodied practice over theoretical instruction.

(2) Curriculum Improvisation through Local Contextualization. To compensate for the lack of standardized curricula, instructors independently adapt their teaching by anchoring abstract moderation concepts to visible local realities. For instance, when teaching the Islamic etiquette of neighborly relations (adab bertetangga), instructors explicitly connect hadith texts to the lived reality of sharing the village with Hindu families.

(3) Informal Peer Discussion Forums Among Instructors. Recognizing the absence of government-provided training, instructors in Ujan Mas Sub-district informally gather often during communal religious events to share experiences and strategies for handling challenging questions from students or countering extremist narratives that students have encountered online. This bottom-up

knowledge-sharing practice reflects what Nasir & Rijal (2021) identify as "keeping the middle path" through grassroots initiatives, where Islamic higher education institutions' moderation frameworks are adapted by local educators in the absence of formal cascading mechanisms.

(4) Personal Interfaith Communication. To reduce psychological anxiety, instructors proactively maintain open personal communication with Hindu religious leaders in the village. This mutual verification ensures that no content in their respective religious education institutions is provocative or offensive creating a safe pedagogical environment for both communities.

(5) Independent Digital Literacy Development. To counter intolerant social media content, instructors self-educate by accessing credible online resources such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs portal and YouTube channels of recognized moderate Islamic scholars (e.g., Quraish Shihab, Gus Baha). Selected materials are then simplified and shared with students in accessible local language.

(6) Creative Use of Available Resources. Despite inadequate facilities, instructors diversify teaching spaces moving sessions outdoors, to mosque courtyards, or under shaded community areas and utilize low-cost improvised teaching aids to maintain student engagement.

## Discussion

This discussion interprets the findings in relation to the four research questions, connecting the results to relevant theoretical frameworks, prior empirical studies, and their implications for policy and practice. The discussion is organized around three dimensions: theoretical contribution, pedagogical implications, and policy gaps.

### Theoretical Contribution

Addressing RQ1 on the form of non-formal PAI implementation integrated with religious moderation, this study demonstrates that the bottom-up moderation model observed in Suro Bali Village is not merely an empirical curiosity but signals a theoretically significant configuration of Islamic education in pluralist rural contexts. The organic emergence of moderation pedagogy from community need rather than from top-down curriculum mandates reflects what scholars of Islamic education have described as contextual *ijtihad*: the capacity of local religious educators to reinterpret Islamic teachings in response to lived social realities (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). This finding extends existing theory by demonstrating that *wasathiyah* (middle-path) values are not simply transmitted through formal curriculum frameworks but are actively co-constructed through the instructor's daily social engagement with a diverse community.

The textual-contextual approach identified in this study aligns closely with socio-constructivist perspectives on religious learning (Aziz, 2020), which emphasize that religious understanding is shaped through social interaction, negotiation of meaning, and communal experience not through passive reception of doctrinal texts alone. This finding is reinforced by Idris & Putra (2021), who demonstrate that Islamic educational institutions play critical roles in religious moderation precisely when they position themselves as sites of social negotiation rather than doctrinal transmission. Furthermore, Yudin, Nugraha, Syarifudin, & colleagues (2025) provide evidence from high school teachers in Banten that building religious moderation through Islamic education requires pedagogical approaches that contextualize Islamic teachings within students' lived social realities. In Suro Bali, instructors instinctively operationalize this approach by using the village's own interfaith coexistence as living instructional content. This parallels findings in broader Islamic education literature where authentic social contexts enhance the internalization of moral and religious values more effectively than abstract classroom instruction (Nurdin, 2021).

Addressing RQ2 and RQ3 on internal and external problems, this study refines the theoretical

understanding of instructor competence in non-formal Islamic education. Prior literature has largely framed instructor limitations in terms of content knowledge deficits (Fahrudin, 2019). This study contributes a more nuanced framework by revealing that the critical constraint is not substantive religious knowledge which is generally adequate but the gap between declarative knowledge of moderation principles and procedural knowledge of how to teach them in a multicultural setting. This distinction between knowing moderation and teaching moderation is theoretically significant: it suggests that capacity-building programs must address pedagogical methodology specifically, not merely theological content.

Furthermore, the psychological burden dimension identified in this study the anxiety of maintaining doctrinal fidelity while practicing inclusive tolerance in a high-stakes communal setting extends existing frameworks on teacher identity in religiously diverse classrooms. Latif, Syukur, Uswatunnisa, & colleagues (2023) address this tension in their analysis of religious moderation education mainstreaming policy in West Sulawesi, finding that teachers in religiously diverse regions experience what they term "moderation anxiety" the fear of being perceived as either too exclusive by coreligionists or too accommodating by religious authorities. This dual role creates a unique form of pedagogical stress not adequately theorized in existing non-formal Islamic education literature. Unlike general education contexts where teacher identity tensions are primarily professional, non-formal Islamic instructors in a village like Suro Bali carry a dual identity burden: they are simultaneously religious authority figures and community harmony custodians. This dual role creates a unique form of pedagogical stress not adequately theorized in existing non-formal Islamic education literature.

Addressing RQ4 on instructor strategies, this study demonstrates that the absence of formal institutional support does not result in pedagogical paralysis but instead drives adaptive innovation grounded in local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*). The instructors' use of *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) as the primary moderation vehicle aligns with classical Islamic educational theory where the teacher's moral character (*akhlak*) is considered inseparable from the educational act itself (Majid, 2012). This finding reinforces the theoretical argument that in non-formal Islamic education, the boundary between the educator as person and the educator as pedagogue is constitutively porous: the instructor does not simply deliver moderation as content but embodies it as practice. This has important implications for how moderation education should be theorized: not as curriculum delivery but as relational and exemplary praxis.

Taken together, the findings reinforce the context-specific nature of religious moderation education. Unlike standardized moderation programs that assume uniform implementation across diverse settings, this study shows that effective moderation education in a pluralist rural village requires what might be termed situated *wasathiyah* moderation that is anchored in the specific social geography, interfaith dynamics, and cultural resources of the local community. This concept extends and enriches the national religious moderation framework (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019) by demonstrating that universal principles of *wasathiyah* must be locally translated to be educationally effective.

### **Pedagogical and Policy Implications**

The heavy reliance on *uswah hasanah* as the primary moderation pedagogy, while practically effective, highlights a systemic fragility: the entire weight of moderation education rests on individual instructor character rather than institutional infrastructure (Suhendri, 2021). Hutagaol, Arifin, Saputro, & colleagues (2025) argue that implementing religious moderation as a strategy for anti-discrimination education in Islamic school management requires systematic institutionalization rather than reliance on charismatic individual teachers. Similarly, Bahri, Rofiqi,

Kusaeri, & colleagues (2025) demonstrate through a comparative study of Islamic approaches in Indonesia and Malaysia that faith-based education systems achieve sustainable moderation outcomes only when moderation principles are embedded in formal curricula, assessment frameworks, and teacher professional development systems. Were key instructors to leave the community, the accumulated social harmony anchored in their personal relationships could be at risk. This underscores the need for institutionalizing moderation practices through formal curriculum tools modules, structured lesson guides, and peer mentoring systems so that moderation education becomes independent of any single instructor's personal qualities.

The external challenges particularly the absence of contextual teaching modules and inadequate digital resilience expose an urgent structural gap. The Ministry of Religious Affairs' national moderation program (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019) has not yet penetrated sufficiently to the level of village non-formal educators, who in practice represent the frontline of religious character formation. Noor (2025), in her framing analysis of nonformal Hajj education, provides a comparative perspective by demonstrating how nonformal religious education settings can effectively integrate global moderation values when equipped with context-sensitive materials. Additionally, Imamah (2023) argues that the integration of religious moderation in developing an Islamic religious education curriculum must occur at the design stage, not as an afterthought or supplementary add-on, if it is to reach non-formal educators systematically. This study supports calls for decentralized, locally tailored training programs and the development of moderation teaching modules that reflect the specific multicultural character of target communities.

The impact of social media as a competing educational force deserves particular policy attention. The finding that moderation values taught in class are frequently undermined by extremist or intolerant online content aligns with broader concerns in the literature about digital radicalization among young Indonesian Muslims. Ridho, Muhlis, Lailaturrohmah, & colleagues (2025) specifically address this challenge in the context of social polarization, calling for SDG-aligned integration of religious moderation into Islamic curricula to support inclusive religious literacy. Instructors' independent counter-narrative efforts, while admirable, are structurally insufficient without institutional backing in the form of media literacy programs specifically designed for non-formal Islamic education settings. Instructors' independent counter-narrative efforts, while admirable, are structurally insufficient without institutional backing in the form of media literacy programs specifically designed for non-formal Islamic education settings.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that non-formal Islamic education in Suro Bali Village is implemented through a textual-contextual approach that integrates wasathiyah values directly into foundational religious content. Instructors successfully leverage local wisdom and the visible reality of Muslim-Hindu coexistence as living instructional material, making religious moderation concrete and experiential for students.

However, the implementation faces serious and systematic challenges. Internally, instructors are constrained by limited pedagogical competence in creative moderation education, psychological pressure to maintain doctrinal and social balance, and insufficient time due to their multiple community roles. Externally, the absence of contextual teaching modules, inadequate physical and digital infrastructure, and minimal institutional support represent structural barriers that individual instructors cannot overcome alone.

The creative and adaptive strategies employed by instructors including moderation by example, curriculum improvisation through local contextualization, informal peer knowledge-

sharing, interfaith communication, and independent digital literacy development demonstrate remarkable resourcefulness. Yet they also underscore the urgency of structured institutional intervention.

This study recommends that the Ministry of Religious Affairs and relevant regional agencies: (1) develop village-appropriate moderation teaching modules for non-formal Islamic education contexts, drawing on the curriculum development frameworks proposed by Masturin (2022) for material design and Imamah (2023) for integration strategies; (2) establish structured training and mentoring programs specifically targeting non-formal instructors, informed by the capacity-building models documented by Aziz & Huda (2024) in mosque-based non-formal education settings; (3) provide digital literacy support to help instructors effectively counter social media narratives, as emphasized by Hanif, Syarifudin, & colleagues (2025) in their analysis of digital-era challenges; and (4) recognize and integrate the bottom-up moderation practices of village-level instructors into broader national policy frameworks, addressing the "superficial implementation" critique raised by Chotimah, Qudsy, & Yusuf (2025).

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