

INTEGRATING RELIGIOUS MODERATION VALUES THROUGH EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

*This study examines the effectiveness of the Arts and Scouts extracurricular programs in instilling the values of religious moderation to address the crisis of tolerance, exclusive grouping, and potential bullying among fifth-grade students at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this research involved students, homeroom teachers, and instructors selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. The main findings indicate that the member randomization system (rolling groups) in the Scouts program compels students to collaborate across groups, thereby effectively instilling the values of *tawazun* (balance) and *i'tidal* (justice). Furthermore, the Arts extracurricular program was shown to foster tolerance (*tasamub*) by honing emotional sensitivity and harmonization. The practical implications of this study confirm that integrating the values of religious moderation through extracurricular platforms successfully breaks down exclusive barriers, mitigates the risk of bullying, and fosters a harmonious madrasah culture.*

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Extracurricular, Tolerance, Character Education, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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INTRODUCTION

Basic education at the Islamic Elementary School (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/MI) level is the most crucial phase in shaping children's character and socio-emotional maturity. Amidst the dynamics of an increasingly heterogeneous society, educational institutions bear a significant responsibility to cultivate a generation that is not only cognitively superior but also possesses social empathy and an anti-discriminatory attitude. Character education in this context must be capable of fostering a positive and inclusive school culture (Milson & Mehlig, 2010). Therefore, strengthening character from an early age serves as a fundamental instrument in preparing students to face global challenges with an open and harmonious mindset (Abrori et al., 2025).

As a manifestation of this inclusive education, internalizing the values of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) is a highly essential strategic step. Religious moderation, which is rooted in the principles of justice (*'adil*), balance (*tawazun*), and tolerance (*tasamuh*), serves as a bastion for tangible character formation in MI students, enabling them to appreciate diversity and avoid group fanaticism. Failure to instill these values at an early age risks breeding egocentric characters and may undermine children's social cohesion in their subsequent developmental stages.

However, the reality on the ground frequently reveals a disparity between ideal educational objectives and students' actual behaviors. The results of a preliminary study at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah uncovered a phenomenon of declining tolerance values, characterized by students' tendencies to interact exclusively and form closed peer groups. Sociologically, this social segregation and peer isolation have been empirically proven to elevate the risks of bullying and ostracism within elementary school environments (Leeuw et al., 2018) and (Contreras et al., 2020). If not immediately addressed through appropriate educational interventions, such exclusivist practices will devastate students' psychological resilience and threaten a peaceful learning climate.

Resolving the issues of intolerance and bullying cannot solely rely on theoretical classroom methods; rather, it necessitates a practical platform functioning as a "social laboratory." The optimization of Scout (and Arts extracurricular activities at MIN 9

Aceh Tengah offers a strategic space to implement Intergroup Contact Theory, wherein direct contact and intergroup collaboration can significantly reduce social prejudice (Wu, 2022). Through a rolling group system in Scouting, students are compelled to break down group egos and collaborate toward common goals. Meanwhile, arts activities serve as an affective medium to refine moral character and alter children's discriminatory perceptions through harmonious emotional experiences.

Although extensive research has been conducted on religious moderation, the majority of prior studies have predominantly focused on secondary and tertiary education levels. There is an evident research gap at the primary education level, particularly regarding critical explorations of the synergy between physical-collaborative activities (Scouting) and affective-aesthetic activities (Arts) as conflict resolution strategies. The novelty of this research lies in its endeavor to integrate the values of religious moderation into these two contrasting extracurricular models to dismantle exclusivity barriers among MI students. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the program's effectiveness in eradicating social boundaries, mitigating bullying risks, and fostering a harmonious madrasah culture among fifth-grade students at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method. This approach was selected for its alignment with the research objectives, which seek to examine, interpret, and provide an in-depth understanding of social phenomena regarding the crisis of tolerance and exclusive attitudes among students within their natural setting. As explained by (Abubakar, 2021), qualitative research is a process that holistically produces descriptive data derived from both oral and written accounts, as well as observations of individual behavior.

The research was conducted at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah. In determining the research subjects, the researcher utilized a purposive sampling method. Referring to (Sugiyono, 2013), this method allows for sample selection based on specific criteria or considerations, ensuring that the participants are those most knowledgeable about the core research issues. The primary subjects are Grade V students

who exhibit indicators of low tolerance, tend to be exclusive, and frequently discriminate among their peers. To ensure the data obtained is comprehensive and holistic, this study also gathered information from supporting informants. These informants include the Grade V classroom teacher and extracurricular instructors (Arts and Scouts), who serve as direct implementers in the application of religious moderation values.

Given the nature of qualitative research, which positions the researcher as the primary instrument, the data collection process in this study relies on three fundamental methods: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document review. According to (Marzuki, 2024), participant observation is employed to allow the researcher to engage directly in observing social interaction dynamics, the formation of peer groups, and the level of student engagement in Arts and Scout extracurricular activities.

Furthermore, semi-structured in-depth interviews are utilized to foster a flexible and open dialogue for information gathering (Sari et al., 2024). The informants for these interviews include teachers and extracurricular coordinators to examine pedagogical tactics in internalizing the values of *tasamuh* (tolerance) and *tawazun* (balance) as well as student representatives to observe their affective responses and behavioral development. To complement these methods, a documentation study is applied to gather administrative archives and activity logs. Documents such as program plans, homeroom teacher evaluations, and visual documentation are collected, as they play a crucial role in validating and supplementing primary data findings (Naamy, 2019).

To ensure high credibility and validity of the findings, this study employs triangulation techniques. Following the definition by (Addussamad, 2021), this approach serves to verify data by utilizing external elements as comparative tools.

Specifically, field testing was conducted through:

1. Source Triangulation: Integrating perspectives from homeroom teachers, students, and supervisors.
2. Technical Triangulation: Cross-referencing results from observations, document reviews, and interviews.

All verified data were processed interactively based on the analysis model by (Rasyid, 2022). The processing stages include data

reduction to extract relevant core information, data display through systematic narrative synthesis, and conclusion drawing. This entire procedure is designed to accurately address the research problems, particularly regarding the impact of extracurricular activities on fostering a tolerant generation within the MIN 9 Aceh Tengah environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through participant observation conducted during both class hours and leisure time, a clear picture emerges regarding the level of tolerance among fifth-grade students at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah, revealing the existence of social barriers and the formation of highly exclusive friendship circles. Students show a strong preference for socializing, sharing meals, and completing school assignments only with peers from their own social groups. Furthermore, there are visible signs of rejection or reluctance when students are required to collaborate in teams with classmates who differ from them, whether in terms of academic performance or social status.

Field observations align with the information provided by Mrs. M, the fifth-grade homeroom teacher. She expressed her concerns regarding the low level of tolerance among students. According to her, students tend to be exclusive in their daily social interactions and during group assignments, where they prefer to associate only with certain circles, such as fellow high-achieving students. Conversely, students who are passive or come from underprivileged backgrounds are often marginalized and become targets of mockery. Mrs. M emphasized that these unhealthy social dynamics have the potential to trigger social bullying if not addressed seriously and immediately.

The Madrasah maximizes its Scouting and Arts programs as platforms to instill moderate attitudes while dismantling exclusive groupings among students. Based on direct observation, students are not given the freedom to choose their own squad mates. Instead, instructors implement a “rolling group” system or random assignment, where group compositions are shuffled every week. This practice is clearly visible during pioneering activities, such as stretcher-making. The researcher found that students who previously had conflicts or did not speak to one another were

ultimately required to interact and collaborate in knot-tying to prevent their stretchers from falling apart.

This is consistent with Mr. B's remarks as the Scout Master. He stressed that cliquishness is highly discouraged in scouting. For this reason, squads are purposefully randomized to teach members the value of working together, even with those they aren't close to, to reach a shared objective whether that's winning a race or just setting up camp. This method serves as a practical way to teach the participants the principles of balance (*tawazun*) and fairness (*i'tidal*) step by step.

As a complement to Scout activities that focus on physical collaboration, extracurricular programs in the arts specifically dance and choir serve as a means to sharpen emotional sensitivity and cultivate *tasamub* (tolerance). Based on observations, the choir rehearsal process requires students to listen to one another's vocals to create a cohesive harmonic sound.

Regarding her approach, Ms. A, as the Art Mentor, often likens the classroom atmosphere to a choir. She emphasizes to her students that if everyone insists on singing the soprano part, the result will certainly be unpleasant to hear. The beauty of a song is created through the harmony of various vocal ranges. Through this analogy, she conveys that the diversity of personalities within the classroom is precisely what builds strong bonds of friendship; therefore, students should never look down on one another.

The successful implementation of this affective method is evidenced by the testimony of a student, identified as N. She shared that she was initially reluctant to interact with her peer, D, who tended to be quiet. However, her perspective shifted after they participated in the Guel dance extracurricular activity, where D proved to be highly skillful and proficient in the movements. This change in attitude has led N to frequently seek D's help for guidance, and their relationship has grown closer, often resulting in them collaborating in various other activities outside of extracurricular hours.

Final observations reveal heartening achievements in shaping the students' character toward greater tolerance. The cliques that once divided them are visibly dissolving. Grade 5 students now display a more welcoming attitude, blending naturally with one

another throughout the school grounds. With verbal taunts and social isolation nearly non-existent, the school has successfully fostered a significantly more serene and unified learning atmosphere.

The formation of exclusive social circles and the habit of restricting interactions among fifth-grade students at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah essentially indicate a low level of social tolerance toward differences. If left unaddressed without directed educational intervention, this issue has the potential to become a precursor to bullying within the school environment. In this regard, a study by (Nawir et al., 2026) emphasizes the need to focus elementary-age character education on the development of social harmony. A student's failure to navigate diversity is believed to lead to aggression and social exclusion.

As a conflict resolution approach, the integration of religious moderation values into the Scout extracurricular program has proven to be highly effective. Students are encouraged to practically implement the principles of *Tawazun* (balance) and *I'tidal* (justice) through a 'rolling group' system policy. This finding aligns with the study by (Budiono et al., 2022), which indicates that scouting educational methods can diminish both in-group and out-group prejudices.

The success of the rolling group system in dismantling exclusivity can be interpreted deeply through the lens of Social Contact Theory. (Sugden et al., 2019) emphasize that social barriers and prejudice can be effectively reduced when intergroup interactions fulfill the prerequisites of equal status and an orientation toward common goals. In the scouting activities at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah, the stretcher-making task serves as a collaborative objective that compels students to dissolve their social playgroup identities. The positive interdependence created through these scouting tasks has proven effective in psychologically reducing intergroup anxiety, enabling the value of justice (*i'tidal*) to be practiced directly rather than merely studied.

Through this approach, students also gain meaningful learning experiences via collaborative problem-solving activities in the field. They come to understand firsthand that achieving a shared goal requires every individual to provide an equal contribution and value, regardless of their background.

Meanwhile, extracurricular activities in the arts have a significant impact on the development of students' emotional intelligence. By applying the principles of harmony in activities such as dance and choir, art instructors effectively instill *tasamub* (tolerance), which is highly relevant to the developmental stage of elementary school children. This perspective aligns with research by (Niken & Julta, 2025), which demonstrates that participation in group arts can suppress egocentric traits while fostering empathy. The process of synchronizing movements or vocals with peers including those they may personally dislike essentially serves as a practical exercise for students to embrace diversity, both rationally (cognitively) and emotionally (affectively).

Within the framework of character education theory (Yani et al., 2025), the effectiveness of this art extracurricular is a clear manifestation of the moral feeling dimension. While the Scout program focuses on shaping moral action through physical collaboration, the arts play a crucial role in engaging the students' affective domain. The analogy of harmony within a choir cultivates students' sensitivity to appreciate diversity as a form of beauty, which ultimately fosters a love for virtuous values. This emotional maturity serves as the primary foundation for establishing an attitude of *tasamub* (tolerance)

The collaboration between these two extracurricular activities ensures that the cultivation of religious moderation values at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah is not merely rote learning, but has transformed into a tangible school culture. The character education approach in this institution goes beyond simple intolerance prevention; it proactively fosters social harmony among students. This aligns with the findings of (Mustafida et al., 2023), which emphasize that for religious moderation to be optimally implemented at the Islamic elementary school level, methods must be designed to be interactive, engaging, and centered on social involvement. Consequently, a tolerant attitude can be firmly established as a foundational defense against future conflicts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the internalization of religious moderation values through extracurricular programs is effective in dismantling exclusive social barriers and minimizing the potential for bullying among fifth-grade students at MIN 9 Aceh Tengah. Specifically, implementing a randomized grouping system (rolling group) in Scout activities successfully instilled the values of fairness (*i'tidal*) and balance (*tawazun*), while the arts extracurricular affectively cultivated the value of tolerance (*tasamuh*) through team harmony exercises. As a practical implication, it is recommended that educators and madrasah administrators maintain and adopt this social interaction-based character education model to prevent intolerance from an early age through meaningful learning experiences. Policymakers may also utilize this practical collaboration concept as a reference framework for extracurricular programs in other Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. This study has limitations, as it focuses on a specific demographic scope and faces a scarcity of supporting literature regarding the integration of religious moderation at the elementary school level. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the demographic scope and examine the involvement of various other extracurricular activities to enrich the findings.

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