

# Religious Moderation Literacy in the PAI Curriculum Canvas: A Genealogical Study of the Concept in K13 and Implementation in the Merdeka Curriculum

**Literasi Moderasi Beragama dalam Kanvas Kurikulum PAI: Studi Genealogi  
Konsep pada K13 dan Implementasi pada Kurikulum Merdeka**

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## ABSTRAK

*Studi genealogi ini mengkaji evolusi dan implementasi literasi moderasi beragama dalam kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di Indonesia, dengan fokus pada analisis komparatif Kurikulum 2013 (K13) dan Kurikulum Merdeka. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif studi pustaka dan analisis wacana genealogi, penelitian ini melacak bagaimana konsep moderasi beragama telah dikonseptualisasikan, diadaptasi, dan dioperasionalkan di antara dua reformasi pendidikan penting ini. Temuan menunjukkan pergeseran krusial dari integrasi implisit nilai-nilai moderasi dalam pendidikan karakter yang lebih luas pada K13, menuju artikulasi eksplisit dan sistematis moderasi beragama sebagai literasi inti dalam Kurikulum Merdeka. Kurikulum Merdeka secara mencolok menggunakan strategi pedagogi yang lebih aktif, berpusat pada siswa, dan berbasis pengalaman, berbeda dengan pendekatan K13 yang lebih didorong oleh konten. Evolusi ini mencerminkan pengakuan kebijakan yang berkembang akan kebutuhan intervensi yang ditargetkan untuk menumbuhkan pemahaman agama yang seimbang, toleran, dan inklusif. Studi ini berkontribusi pada teori kurikulum dengan menggambarkan bagaimana kebutuhan masyarakat mendorong formalisasi nilai-nilai menjadi literasi eksplisit dalam kerangka pendidikan, menawarkan wawasan berharga bagi pengembang kurikulum dan pembuat kebijakan secara global..*

## ABSTRACT

This genealogical study examines the evolution and implementation of religious moderation literacy within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Indonesia, focusing on a comparative analysis of the K13 (Kurikulum 2013) and Merdeka (Independent) Curricula. Utilizing a qualitative library research approach with genealogical discourse analysis, the study traces how the concept of religious moderation has been conceptualized, adapted, and operationalized across these two significant educational reforms. Findings indicate a crucial shift from K13's implicit integration of moderation values within broader character education to the Merdeka Curriculum's explicit and systematic articulation of moderasi beragama as a core literacy. The Merdeka Curriculum notably employs more active, student-centered, and experiential pedagogical strategies, contrasting with K13's more content-driven approach. This evolution reflects a growing policy recognition of the need for targeted interventions to foster balanced, tolerant, and inclusive religious understanding. The study contributes to curriculum theory by illustrating how societal needs drive the formalization of values into explicit literacies within educational frameworks, offering valuable insights for curriculum developers and policymakers globally..

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation has emerged as a crucial global discourse, particularly within pluralistic societies striving for social harmony and peace. Despite its undeniable urgency, a significant gap persists

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between the theoretical conceptualization of religious moderation and its effective integration and implementation within educational frameworks, especially in the context of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Indonesia (Subaidi, 2017). This theoretical gap is further exacerbated by the lack of a comprehensive understanding of how these critical concepts are systematically embedded and developed across various iterations of the national curriculum (Azra, 2018). While numerous scholarly works and policy documents underscore the necessity of fostering religious moderation, there remains a clear void in comprehensive analyses that trace the conceptual journey of moderation principles within the dynamic landscape of PAI curriculum development (Muhaimin, 2020). This prevailing ambiguity often leads to inconsistencies in pedagogical approaches, varying interpretations among educators, and, consequently, suboptimal cultivation of moderation values among students (Zamroni, 2011). This study seeks to address this critical theoretical-practical disconnect by meticulously examining the genealogical development of religious moderation literacy in the PAI curriculum, providing a robust framework for enhancing its implementation.

Previous academic efforts have extensively explored various dimensions of religious moderation in the Indonesian context, including its philosophical foundations, socio-political implications, and diverse pedagogical strategies (Hasbullah, 2019). For example, the study by Ali and Abdullah (2019) offers valuable insights into the multifaceted initiatives by the Indonesian government to promote religious moderation through various social and community programs; however, these studies often overlook detailed examinations of the specific curricular mechanisms through which these values are formally transmitted and integrated into educational practice (Ma'arif, 2021). Similarly, the research conducted by Nurhayati and Rahman (2020) carefully investigates the effectiveness of religious education in fostering tolerance and interfaith understanding among students; yet, their primary analytical lens tends to focus on student perceptions and outcomes, rather than undertaking a deep and longitudinal analysis of the conceptual evolution of the curriculum across different policy periods (Said, 2018). Another significant body of work, exemplified by Wahid and Solihin (2022), offers a critical review of the content embedded in PAI textbooks, explicitly identifying the urgent need for more explicit, systematic, and coherent integration of religious moderation principles; however, a comprehensive genealogical analysis tracing these principles across various curriculum iterations—particularly the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum—has not been a central thrust of their investigation (Fauzi & Handayani, 2023). As a result, although previous scholarly contributions are undoubtedly valuable, they have yet to systematically map the intricate conceptual trajectory of religious moderation literacy within the PAI curriculum across various policy phases, especially in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, thus leaving a clear research gap in fully understanding the continuity, discontinuities, and subtle shifts in its pedagogical framing.

The distinct novelty and significant contribution of this study lie in its innovative application of a genealogical approach to understanding the complex evolution of religious moderation literacy in Indonesia's PAI curriculum. In contrast to many earlier studies that largely relied on static depictions of curriculum content or focused primarily on the immediate outcomes of its implementation, this research meticulously traces the historical and conceptual development of religious moderation in the 2013 Curriculum and subsequently conducts a rigorous analysis of its transformation, adaptation, and various implementation strategies in the newer Merdeka Curriculum (Suryana & Santoso, 2022). This unique genealogical lens offers an unparalleled perspective, revealing how the concept of religious moderation has been interpreted, adapted, and strategically operationalized across various phases of educational reform (Foucault, 1977). By critically examining this conceptual lineage, the study promises to generate new, profound insights into the inherent challenges and emerging opportunities in seamlessly integrating religious moderation into the broader national education landscape. Furthermore, it contributes significantly to a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of curriculum development dynamics in a rapidly evolving socio-religious context (Apple, 2004). The analytical framework employed will go beyond merely describing curricular changes; instead, it will critically assess the underlying philosophical assumptions, policy rationales, and pedagogical theories that consistently drive these significant curricular shifts, thereby offering a more profound and impactful contribution to the existing academic discourse in this field (Giroux, 2008).

This study aims to achieve several interrelated objectives. First, it seeks to rigorously identify and systematically analyze the nuanced conceptualization of religious moderation literacy as explicitly and implicitly embedded in the 2013 Islamic Religious Education Curriculum. Second, it aims to meticulously examine how these established concepts are subsequently translated, reinterpreted, and practically

implemented within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. Third—and most importantly—the study endeavors to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of the genealogy and practical realities of implementing religious moderation literacy across both curricula, namely the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. Ultimately, through this multifaceted approach, the research aspires to uncover the intricate evolutionary trajectory of religious moderation within Indonesian PAI, highlighting not only key continuities but also significant divergences and their far-reaching implications for cultivating a truly tolerant, inclusive, and harmonious society.

The central argument underpinning this study posits that while both the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum fundamentally aim to instill the principles of religious moderation, there are clear and significant shifts in their explicit framing, pedagogical approaches adopted, and the particular emphases placed on different aspects of religious moderation literacy. These observed shifts, the study argues, are not arbitrary but rather reflect the evolving priorities of national policy, emerging societal demands, and contemporary pedagogical theories. Consequently, these variations inevitably lead to differing expectations regarding how students are expected to acquire, internalize, and ultimately embody these essential values. The study further argues that a deep and thorough understanding of the nuances of these changes is critical to optimizing the overall effectiveness of the curriculum in fostering authentic religious moderation among the younger generation.

The importance and relevance of this study are manifold, extending across both academic and practical domains. Academically, it makes a substantial contribution to the existing body of knowledge in curriculum studies, particularly in the specific context of religious education and the complex processes involved in integrating critical socio-cultural values into national curricula. The innovative genealogical approach employed here offers a significant methodological advancement for systematically analyzing curriculum development and evolution over extended periods. Practically, the findings derived from this study are expected to provide invaluable insights for key stakeholders—including policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators—enabling them to refine and enhance existing strategies for effectively integrating religious moderation into daily educational practices. By gaining a deep understanding of the historical and conceptual evolution of these principles, stakeholders will be better equipped to develop more coherent, systematic, and ultimately more effective approaches to fostering religious moderation literacy among students. This, in turn, will contribute significantly to strengthening social cohesion, promoting interfaith harmony, and reinforcing national resilience within Indonesia's diverse social fabric. Hence, this study serves as a vital resource for enhancing the relevance and overall impact of Islamic education in promoting a balanced, tolerant, and genuinely moderate religious outlook in a pluralistic society.

## 2. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a specific focus on library research (literature review), grounded in genealogical methodology. This approach is considered most suitable for conducting the “Genealogical Study of Religious Moderation Literacy within the Canvas of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Curriculum: A Genealogy of Concepts in the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and Their Implementation in the Merdeka Curriculum,” as it enables a deep, historical, and conceptual analysis of documented information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The genealogical method, as conceptualized by Foucault (1977), does not merely trace linear origins but also investigates the fragmented and often contested emergence of concepts within specific historical and institutional contexts. In this study, genealogy serves as a critical lens to explore how the concept of religious moderation literacy has been constructed, reconstructed, and implemented in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **The Conceptual Evolution of Religious Moderation Literacy in the 2013 Curriculum (K13): Explicit and Implicit Framings**

The results section is a core component of a scientific article that presents final outcomes without detailing the data analysis process, including hypothesis testing results. Findings may be presented in tables or graphs to clarify the results visually. In contrast, the discussion is considered the most critical part of a scientific article (Imron Fauzi, 2019). The aim of the discussion is to: answer the research problem, interpret the findings, integrate them into the existing body of knowledge, and develop or modify existing theories. The 2013 Curriculum (K13) implicitly integrates religious moderation literacy through its core

competencies and objectives in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), emphasizing the cultivation of tolerant and harmonious attitudes in accordance with Pancasila values (Kemendikbud, 2013; Said, 2018). Moderation is seen as a natural outcome of a correct understanding of religion, rather than as a standalone concept (Mujahid, 2015). This integration is carried out through character education, promoting values such as honesty and responsibility, as well as teaching Qur'anic verses and Hadiths related to *wasatiyyah* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *ta'awun* (cooperation) (Samani & Haryanto, 2012; Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2013). However, pedagogical guidelines for teachers are often general in nature, resulting in varied interpretations and implementations (Zamroni, 2011), consistent with the theory of the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968). Moreover, the K13 assessment system, which emphasizes cognitive and psychomotor domains, has led to less standardized evaluations of character aspects, including religious moderation (Kusumaningrum & Dewi, 2019). Nevertheless, K13 laid a significant foundation by introducing themes such as interfaith dialogue and diversity (Nasrullah, 2020) as a response to rising radicalism (Tholkhah & Ma'arif, 2019). Its effectiveness, however, heavily depends on the role of teachers (Sutrisno, 2017), highlighting the need for more explicit curricular articulation, as advocated by Apple (2004). While K13 serves as an important initial step, its implicit approach stands in contrast to the more developed and explicit evolution in the Merdeka Curriculum. The novelty of this finding lies in identifying this phase of "implicit framing" as a basis for comparison.

### **Strategies for Implementing and Adapting Religious Moderation Literacy in the Merdeka Curriculum**

The Merdeka Curriculum represents a significant shift toward a more explicit and deliberate approach in integrating religious moderation literacy, marking a clear departure from the implicitness of the 2013 Curriculum (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). This curriculum directly articulates religious moderation as a core competency aimed at shaping a generation that is tolerant and balanced in their religious understanding (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019). Its main strategies include differentiated and contextual learning that allows for local adaptation and the use of relevant, real-life examples (Permendikbudristek No. 16 of 2022; Prasetyo & Haryanti, 2021). An interdisciplinary approach is also promoted, positioning moderation as a cross-curricular life skill in line with holistic education principles (Purnomo & Sari, 2020; Miller, 2007).

There is strong emphasis on experiential and project-based learning, such as interfaith dialogue activities and community service (Suryana & Santoso, 2022). This aligns with constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1970), encouraging students to actively internalize moderate values. Furthermore, the Merdeka Curriculum explicitly links religious moderation to the "Profile of Pancasila Students," especially the dimension of "Faith in God Almighty, Piety, and Noble Character" (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; Maimun, 2021). Critical thinking is also promoted, particularly in evaluating religious narratives (Santoso & Sari, 2023).

Additionally, there is a renewed focus on professional teacher development, equipping educators with pedagogical skills and confidence to teach sensitive topics (Suprpto, 2022; Wahyudi & Amin, 2023). However, challenges remain, including achieving consistent understanding, resource availability, and potential resistance from conservative segments (Basri, 2023). The novelty of this section lies in its operational detailing of religious moderation literacy through pedagogical shifts and its alignment with the Pancasila Student Profile, contributing to the broader field of educational policy studies.

### **Comparative Analysis: Continuities, Discontinuities, and Emerging Pedagogical Approaches to Religious Moderation Literacy Across Curricula**

A comparative analysis of the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the Merdeka Curriculum reveals both continuities and discontinuities in the integration of religious moderation literacy. A key continuity lies in the shared goal of fostering a balanced and harmonious understanding of religion in line with Pancasila, preventing extremism, and promoting social cohesion (Said, 2018; Azra, 2018). The emphasis on moral and character development remains foundational (Apple, 2004).

The most prominent discontinuity lies in the clarity and systematization of integration. K13 embeds religious moderation implicitly within character education, whereas the Merdeka Curriculum explicitly names and prioritizes religious moderation, providing clearer guidance and objectives (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019; Tholkhah & Ma'arif, 2019). This shift reflects a policy evolution from broad intentions to more defined interventions (Apple, 2004).

Significant pedagogical shifts are also observed. K13 follows a more traditional, content-driven approach (Mujahid, 2015), while the Merdeka Curriculum adopts active, experiential, and student-centered methodologies such as project-based learning and interfaith dialogue (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; Piaget, 1970). These approaches encourage students to build understanding through practice and reflection. Another notable discontinuity is in the assessment framework: K13 faced challenges in consistently assessing character development, while the Merdeka Curriculum, through the Pancasila Student Profile, offers a more holistic model for evaluation (Maimun, 2021; Kusumaningrum & Dewi, 2019).

The Merdeka Curriculum enhances the relevance and applicability of religious moderation by encouraging critical thinking and equipping students to navigate diversity (Santoso & Sari, 2023; Suprpto, 2022). This shift also broadens the definition of literacy beyond textual understanding to include emotional intelligence and intergroup empathy (Wahyudi & Amin, 2023; New London Group, 1996). The novelty of this study lies in its detailed mapping of both continuities and discontinuities, illustrating a progression from implicit integration to a more explicit and systematic form of religious moderation literacy, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of curriculum reform in Indonesia.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This genealogical study has systematically explored the conceptual evolution and implementation strategies of religious moderation literacy within Indonesia's Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, specifically comparing the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings reveal a clear progression from an implicitly embedded approach in K13—where religious moderation was largely integrated within broader character education and general PAI content—toward more explicit, systematic, and pedagogically innovative strategies in the Merdeka Curriculum. While K13 laid an important foundation by promoting values aligned with moderation, the lack of explicit framing and specific pedagogical guidance often led to varied interpretations and inconsistent implementation.

In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum explicitly defines religious moderation as a core literacy, offering clearer guidance and directly linking it to the "Profile of Pancasila Students." This newer curriculum emphasizes more active, student-centered, and experiential learning methodologies—such as project-based activities and interdisciplinary approaches—to cultivate a deeper and more practical understanding of religious moderation. This shift reflects a deliberate policy decision to move beyond theoretical instruction toward the cultivation of practical skills for navigating religious diversity and fostering social harmony.

Despite the progress, challenges remain in ensuring consistent understanding among educators and providing sufficient resources for effective implementation. Ultimately, this study highlights the dynamic nature of curriculum development as a response to evolving societal needs, demonstrating Indonesia's continued commitment to nurturing a generation grounded in moderate, tolerant, and inclusive religious values.

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