

Conceptual Model of Islamic Education Curriculum Transformation Based on Religious Moderation and Social Cohesion for the Prevention of Social Polarization in a Plural Society

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Article Info

Received: 19 June 2026

Revised: 12 July 2026

Accepted: 15 July 2026

Keywords:

Islamic education curriculum, religious moderation, social cohesion, social polarization, pluralistic society.

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ABSTRACT: Social polarization is becoming an increasingly complex challenge in pluralistic societies because it has an impact on weakening social integration, increasing intolerance, and declining social cohesion. This research aims to analyze the urgency of transforming the Islamic Education curriculum in the face of social polarization and formulate a conceptual model of the Islamic Education curriculum based on religious moderation and social cohesion as a strategy to prevent social polarization. The research uses a qualitative approach with library research design. Data was obtained through a systematic literature search on Scopus, Dimensions, Crossref, Google Scholar, and SINTA-accredited national journals with a publication range of 2021–2026. Of the 286 documents identified, 37 publications met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis. The analysis produced four main themes, namely the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum, the internalization of the value of religious moderation, the strengthening of social cohesion, and the prevention of social polarization. The synthesis of the four themes resulted in a conceptual model consisting of six components, namely philosophical foundations, sociological foundations, goal transformation, materials, learning strategies, and evaluation. This model explains the causal mechanism that the transformation of curriculum components internalizes the values of *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, and *i'tidal*, which further strengthens social solidarity, social integration, social trust, and social inclusion as a mechanism to strengthen social cohesion that contributes to the prevention of social polarization. The contribution of the research lies in the formulation of a conceptual mechanism that connects the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum with the strengthening of social cohesion through the internalization of religious moderation, thereby expanding the study of the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum while providing a conceptual basis for policy development and curriculum design in a plural society. Further research is needed to test this conceptual model at various levels and contexts of educational institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's global society faces increasingly complex challenges due to the increasing diversity of social, cultural, ethnic, and religious identities interacting in increasingly open public spaces. On the one hand, plurality is social capital that can strengthen the development of a democratic and inclusive society. However, on the other hand, diversity that is not managed properly has the potential to give rise to social fragmentation, group polarization, and various forms of identity-based conflict. The development of digital technology and social media has also accelerated the spread of narratives of exclusivism, hate speech, and identity politics that widen the distance between social groups. This

phenomenon does not only occur at the global level, but also becomes a real challenge in the lives of Indonesian people who are known as a multicultural country with a high level of diversity [1].

In the Indonesian context, social polarization is increasingly seen in various dynamics of people's lives, both in political, religious, and socio-cultural aspects. Differences in religious views and political affiliations often develop into symbolic conflicts that disrupt the social cohesion of society. Various studies show that the increasing dissemination of provocative information through digital media contributes to the growth of intolerance and exclusivism among the public. This condition is a serious concern because it can threaten national integration and reduce the quality of social relations

between groups in a pluralistic society [2].

One of the strategic instruments that has an important role in building a harmonious social life is education. Education not only functions as a means of knowledge transfer, but also as a medium for character formation, internalization of values, and the development of students' social competence. From the perspective of the sociology of education, educational institutions have the responsibility to instill the values of togetherness, tolerance, and respect for diversity in order to create a peaceful and civilized society. Therefore, the education system needs to be designed adaptively to be able to respond to the social challenges that develop in contemporary society.

In this context, Islamic Education has a very strategic position because it not only teaches normative religious aspects, but also contains the values of humanity, justice, brotherhood, and respect for differences. Islamic education essentially aims to form human beings who have a balance between spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions. These values are an important foundation in building an inclusive and harmonious community life. Muaz and Ruswandi's research shows that the integration of the value of religious moderation in Islamic education can strengthen tolerance, develop a proportionate understanding of religion, and encourage students to respect the diversity that exists in society [3].

Nevertheless, the implementation of Islamic Education in various educational institutions still faces a number of challenges. The curriculum used in general is still oriented towards achieving cognitive aspects and normative mastery of religious materials. The social dimension related to the ability to coexist in pluralistic societies often has not received adequate attention. As a result, the learning process has not been fully able to form students who have social competence to deal with the various dynamics of diversity that develop in people's lives. This condition shows the need to transform the Islamic Education curriculum to be more responsive to contemporary social challenges [4].

The transformation of the curriculum can be carried out through strengthening the value of religious moderation as one of the relevant approaches in dealing with the phenomenon of social polarization. Religious moderation emphasizes the importance of a middle stance, balance, tolerance, non-violence, and respect for diversity in social life. This concept serves not only as a theological approach, but also as a social strategy capable of strengthening harmony between different groups. Prasetya's research explains that religious moderation has a significant contribution in forming a rational, inclusive, and open mindset to differences so that it can be an important instrument in preventing identity-based social conflicts [5].

In addition to religious moderation, the concept of social cohesion also has strong relevance in building a harmonious society. Social cohesion refers to the level of attachment, solidarity, trust, and belonging that develops within a community. Societies that have high social cohesion tend to be better able to manage differences constructively and avoid destructive conflicts. The results of Murdianto's research show that Islamic education that integrates the values of tolerance, solidarity, and respect for diversity is able to strengthen social cohesion in a multicultural society. Therefore, social cohesion can be positioned as one of the main goals in the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum [6].

Conceptually, religious moderation and social

cohesion have a complementary relationship. Religious moderation serves as the foundation of values that form inclusive and tolerant attitudes, while social cohesion is a manifestation of these values in social life. The integration of these two concepts in the Islamic Education curriculum has the potential to result in an educational process that not only emphasizes the aspect of individual religiosity, but also strengthens the social capacity of students in building harmonious relationships in the midst of diversity. This approach is in line with the idea of interdisciplinary Islamic education that connects religious values with the social realities of plural societies [7].

Research on religious moderation, social cohesion, and the Islamic Education curriculum has shown significant progress in recent years, but it is still developing in different study focuses. Studies on religious moderation generally explain strategies for internalizing the values of tolerance, inclusive attitudes, and the prevention of extremism in Islamic Education learning. Meanwhile, research on social cohesion explains the dimensions of social solidarity, social integration, and social trust as indicators of creating a harmonious community life. On the other hand, research on the Islamic Education curriculum focuses on the development of objectives, materials, learning strategies, and evaluations to improve students' learning outcomes. Although each study makes an important contribution to its field, the literature stops at explaining the relationship in their respective domains and has not explained the transformation mechanism that links changes in curriculum components with the internalization of the value of religious moderation, strengthening social cohesion, and preventing social polarization as an educational output.

These limitations have real consequences. Theoretically, there is no conceptual framework that explains the causal pathway of how the transformation of goals, materials, learning strategies, and evaluations in the Islamic Education curriculum forms the internalization of the values of *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, and *i'tidal*, then strengthens social cohesion, and ultimately contributes to the prevention of social polarization. As a result, the relationship between the Islamic Education curriculum, religious moderation, and social cohesion is still understood as an associative relationship, not as a transformation mechanism that can be explained systematically. Practically, these limitations cause curriculum developers and educational institutions to not have an adequate conceptual foundation to design a curriculum that not only produces religious competence, but also builds social cohesion as a preventive strategy against social polarization in pluralistic societies. Based on these gaps, this study develops a conceptual model of Islamic Education curriculum transformation that explains the mechanism of the relationship between curriculum components, internalization of religious moderation, strengthening social cohesion, and preventing social polarization in one complete conceptual framework.

The fragmentation of the study creates a theoretical gap because there is no conceptual framework that explains the causal relationship between curriculum transformation, internalization of the value of religious moderation, strengthening social cohesion, and preventing social polarization. As a result, practically curriculum developers and educational institutions do not have a systematic conceptual foundation to design an Islamic Education curriculum that not only shapes the religious competence of students, but also generates social capacity that is able to

strengthen the integration of plural societies and reduce the risk of social polarization. On the basis of these gaps, this study develops a conceptual model of Islamic education curriculum transformation that explains the mechanism of the relationship between curriculum components, internalization of the value of religious moderation, the formation of social cohesion, and the prevention of social polarization as a whole series of processes [1], [6].

Based on this description, this research offers a novelty in the form of a conceptual model of the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum that explains the causal mechanism of how the curriculum components produce social change through the internalization of the value of religious moderation and the strengthening of social cohesion. In contrast to Muaz and Ruswandi's research which focuses on the internalization of religious moderation in Islamic Education, Murdianto who places Islamic Education as a reinforcer of social cohesion, and Maksum who explains the contribution of religious moderation to social cohesion, this research builds a conceptual mechanism that connects the transformation of goals, materials, learning strategies, and evaluation as curriculum inputs, internalization of tawassuth values, tasamuh, and i'tidal as an education mechanism, strengthening social solidarity, social integration, social trust, and social inclusion as intermediate outcomes, as well as reducing the potential for social polarization as the final outcome.

Thus, the conceptual surplus of this research lies in the formulation of a transformation path that explains how the values of Islamic Education are implemented through the curriculum to produce social impacts that can be traced logically, not just showing that religious moderation and social cohesion are interrelated. This research aims to analyze the urgency of transforming the Islamic Education curriculum in facing the challenges of social polarization and formulate the conceptual model as a theoretical basis for the development of a curriculum that is responsive to a pluralistic society. Theoretically, this study expands the study of the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum by presenting a conceptual mechanism that connects the normative dimension of religion with social outputs in a systematic manner. Practically, the resulting model is expected to be a reference for curriculum developers, educational institutions, and policymakers in designing learning that is not only oriented towards the achievement of religious competence, but also on strengthening social cohesion as a preventive strategy against social polarization.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand, interpret, and construct the meaning of various concepts related to the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum, religious moderation, social cohesion, and the prevention of social polarization in a pluralistic society. Meanwhile, the literature research method is used because the focus of research is not directed at the collection of field data, but on an in-depth study of various relevant scientific literature sources. Literature research allows researchers to conduct conceptual exploration, identification of thought patterns, and synthesis of theories that are the basis for the

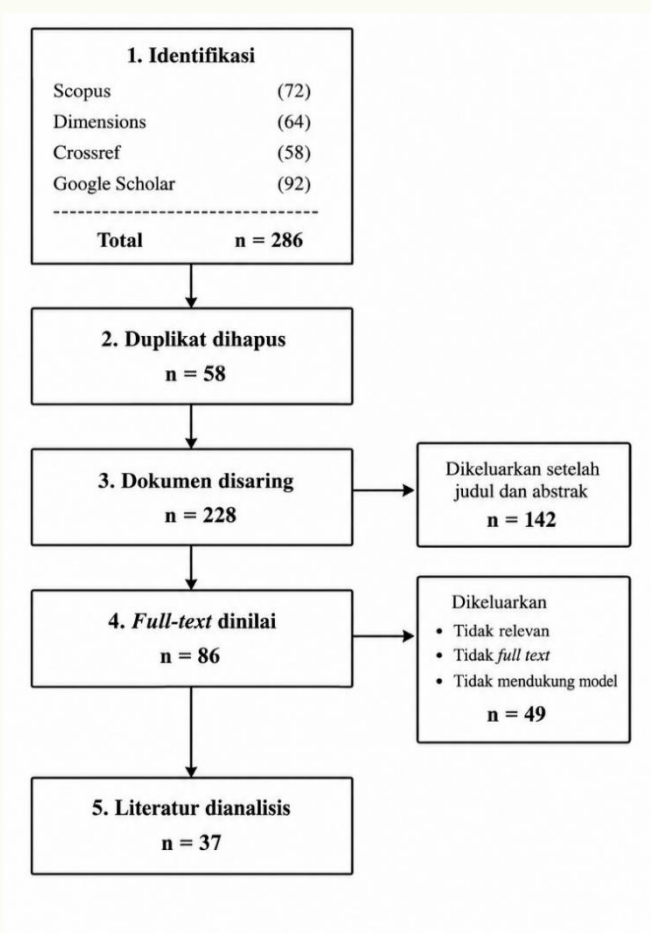
preparation of comprehensive conceptual models. In addition, this method is considered suitable for generating new theoretical constructions through the process of analysis and integration of various previous research results [8].

The source of research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is in the form of articles from reputable national and international journals and academic books that discuss the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum, religious moderation, social cohesion, and social polarization. Secondary data includes education policy documents, regulations on religious moderation, research reports, scientific proceedings, and other relevant supporting documents. The literature search was conducted from January to March 2026 through the Scopus database, Dimensions, Crossref, Google Scholar, and SINTA-accredited national journal portals using a combination of keywords "Islamic education curriculum" OR "Islamic education", "curriculum transformation", "religious moderation" OR "religious moderation", "social cohesion" OR "social cohesion", and "social polarization" OR "social polarization".

The identification process resulted in 286 documents. After the removal of 58 duplicate documents, 228 documents were obtained for the title and abstract screening stage. At this stage, 142 documents were eliminated because they did not discuss the relationship between the Islamic Education curriculum, religious moderation, social cohesion, and social polarization according to the focus of the research. A total of 86 documents were then read in their entirety (full-text assessment), and 49 documents were issued because they were conceptual articles without relevant discussions, did not have a complete manuscript available, or did not contribute to the development of the conceptual model. Thus, 37 publications met all inclusion criteria and were analyzed through a thematic synthesis process to build a conceptual model of research

Inclusion criteria include: (1) publication in the 2021-2026 period; (2) journal articles indexed by Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, or national journals accredited by SINTA, as well as academic books from reputable publishers; (3) discuss at least two of the four main concepts, namely the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum, religious moderation, social cohesion, and social polarization; and (4) provide conceptual arguments that can be used in the preparation of research models. On the other hand, publications that do not go through the peer review process, in the form of popular opinions, news, or have substance outside the focus of the research are excluded from the analysis process [9].

Figure 1. Research Literature Selection Flow Diagram
(Adapted from PRISMA 2020)



The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies and systematic literature search. The data collection process begins with determining research keywords, searching for scientific sources in various databases, filtering literature based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, and organizing documents that meet the criteria into the research database. Furthermore, each document is read thoroughly to identify units of information related to the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum, religious moderation, social cohesion, and social polarization.

Data analysis was carried out through two stages. The first stage uses content analysis to identify and code the key concepts that appear in each document. The coding results are then grouped into conceptual categories based on similarities in meaning and relationships between concepts. The second stage uses thematic analysis which includes the process of open coding, categorization, theme development, and theme review to compile the main themes that are the basis for the formation of a conceptual research model. The validity of the synthesis is carried out through cross-literature comparison so that each theme produced is supported by more than one scientific source. The analysis process is carried out through several stages, namely the collection of literature data, data reduction, categorization of themes, interpretation of meaning, conceptual synthesis, and the preparation of conceptual models that describe the relationships between concepts in a systematic manner [10], [11].

The validity of research results is maintained through critical evaluation of the literature, cross-reference between sources, analysis of supporting and different findings, and assessment of the credibility of scientific sources. Critical evaluation is carried out by comparing arguments, concepts, and findings from various publications to identify points of agreement and differences of view in the literature. In addition to examining research that supports the relationship between Islamic education curriculum transformation, religious moderation, and social cohesion, this study also examines literature that shows limitations, criticisms, or findings that are not entirely in line so that the conceptual model formulated is built through a process of synthesis and evaluation of various perspectives, not just the accumulation of evidence that supports a single argument. Furthermore, cross-reference techniques are used to trace the consistency of concepts, clarify the relationship between findings, and identify the development of ideas in various publications. The credibility of the source is evaluated based on the peer review process, the reputation of the journal or publisher, indexation, methodological quality, and the relevance of the substance to the focus of the research. Through this procedure, the resulting conceptual model is prepared based on a critical synthesis of various scientific perspectives so that it has a stronger, more transparent, and academically accountable argumentative basis [12].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Polarization as a Challenge to a Plural Society

The results of an analysis of various literature show that social polarization has become one of the most serious challenges faced by pluralistic societies in the contemporary era. Social polarization is no longer understood simply as differences in views or preferences between individuals and groups, but has developed into a process of social division characterized by the strengthening of group identities, increasing social distance, and declining constructive interactions between different groups. In a pluralistic society consisting of diverse religions, cultures, ethnicities, and political orientations, social polarization has the potential to threaten social stability because it encourages the formation of increasingly rigid social boundaries. Arora et al. explains that social polarization is a process when individuals tend to identify strongly with their own group while building negative perceptions of other groups. This condition causes the space for social dialogue to narrow and strengthens the tendency of exclusivism in social life. These findings suggest that social polarization is a multidimensional phenomenon that involves social, cultural, political, religious, and technological aspects simultaneously [13].

Based on a synthesis of various studies, the main characteristics of social polarization are shown through increasing social dichotomy, strengthening of group loyalty, reduced cross-identity interactions, and the development of stereotypes and prejudices against different groups. Bein explains that polarization not only affects a person's political preferences, but also shapes social identities that can affect interpersonal relationships and the cohesion of society as a whole. When group identity becomes more dominant than national identity or a more inclusive social identity, society tends to experience deeper social fragmentation. In the context of a pluralistic society, this condition becomes increasingly complex because every difference has the

potential to be used as the basis for the formation of an exclusive and mutually confrontational group [14].

The literature analyzed shows that social polarization develops through the interaction of various social, political, cultural, and religious factors. In the context of a pluralistic society, religious polarization is one of the most dominant forms because it is characterized by increasing identity exclusivism, weakening acceptance of diversity, and the development of intolerance in intergroup relations. These findings are not only reported by Mahfud and Wasilah, but also strengthened by various other studies that show that strengthening religious identities that are not accompanied by the value of religious moderation has the potential to widen social distance, reduce intergroup trust, and increase vulnerability to social conflict. Therefore, religious polarization cannot be understood as a matter of differences in beliefs alone, but as an accumulation of social processes that weaken social cohesion in a pluralistic society. Mahfud and Wasilah [15], found that social media has become a very influential space in the dissemination of exclusive religious narratives, thus strengthening religion-based social segregation. This condition is further exacerbated by the spread of religious hoaxes that use identity sentiments to build prejudice and distrust between community groups. Fathurrohman et al. explained that religious information that is manipulative and unverified can trigger social conflicts because it encourages the formation of negative perceptions of different groups. Therefore, religious polarization is not only a theological problem, but also a social problem that has a direct impact on the harmony of a pluralistic society [16].

In addition to religious polarization, political polarization is also becoming an increasingly dominant phenomenon in the life of modern society. The development of communication technology and digital media has changed the way people access political information, thus giving rise to the tendency to form increasingly homogeneous and exclusive political groups. Digital media also plays a role in strengthening political segmentation through the selective dissemination of information that tends to benefit certain groups. In these conditions, differences in political choices are no longer understood as part of healthy democratic dynamics, but develop into social identities that affect the pattern of relationships between citizens. In addition, digital social networks tend to form closed communities that strengthen the beliefs of each group and reduce the chances of dialogue with groups of different views. As a result, the public space that was supposed to be an arena for the exchange of ideas has turned into a space for the reproduction of conflict and polarization.

The phenomenon of social polarization is also further strengthened by the emergence of cultural polarization and digital polarization. Cultural polarization occurs when society builds social boundaries based on differences in values, lifestyles, traditions, and certain cultural orientations. Meanwhile, digital polarization is developing through the use of social media algorithms that indirectly group individuals based on the same information preferences. Rodilosso explained that the phenomenon of bubble filters and echo chambers causes individuals to receive information that is in line with their own beliefs more often, thus reducing the opportunity to understand different perspectives. This situation strengthens social segregation because people live in different information

spaces and it is increasingly difficult to build a common understanding of the social realities they face [17].

The results of this study also show that social polarization is influenced by various interrelated factors. Identity politics is one of the main factors that encourages the formation of polarization because it makes differences in religion, ethnicity, culture, and political affiliation as instruments of social mobilization. When identity is used to gain political support or strengthen the dominance of a certain group, differences that should be a source of social wealth turn into a source of conflict. In addition, intolerance and radicalism also contribute to increasing social polarization because it encourages the development of exclusivity and rejection of diversity. Mahfud and Wasilah show that extreme and non-moderate religious narratives have a close relationship with increasing social segregation in the digital space as well as the real social space [15].

Other factors that contribute to strengthening social polarization are digital disinformation and low diversity literacy. The development of information technology has made it easy to access various sources of information, but at the same time it has also opened up opportunities for the dissemination of inaccurate and provocative information. Zabieno et al. It found that social media algorithms, bubble filters, and echo chambers accelerate the dissemination of information that reinforces group bias and reduces people's ability to critically verify information. When this condition is exacerbated by low diversity literacy, people become more susceptible to narratives that divide and encourage the formation of negative stereotypes against other groups. As a result, the polarization process is getting faster and harder to control [18].

The impact caused by social polarization is not only limited to increasing differences of views, but also affects the quality of social relations in society. Growing polarization can trigger social conflicts, both in the form of open conflicts and latent conflicts that last for a long time. Mahfud and Wasilah explained that the increasing social segregation based on identity has the potential to increase the risk of conflict because each group tends to view other groups as a threat to their existence. In addition, polarization also causes fragmentation of society which is characterized by weakening social solidarity and reduced ability of people to work together in achieving common goals [15].

The findings of this study also show that one of the most significant impacts of social polarization is the decline in social cohesion and social trust. Martin-Gutierrez et al. explained that polarization causes society to be divided into increasingly exclusive groups, thus reducing the sense of togetherness and social solidarity. This condition has an impact on the decrease in the level of trust in individuals, other social groups, and public institutions. Falkenberg et al. emphasizing that societies that experience high levels of polarization tend to have a low level of social trust, both in the democratic system and in fellow citizens. This decline in social trust is a serious threat to the sustainability of a pluralistic society because trust is the main foundation for the creation of social cohesion, national integration, and harmonious social life. Therefore, various preventive efforts oriented towards strengthening tolerance, dialogue, diversity literacy, and social moderation are urgent needs to prevent further strengthening of social polarization in a pluralistic society [19], [20].

Religious Moderation and Social Cohesion in the Perspective of Islamic Education

The results of the analysis of various literature show that religious moderation is a fundamental concept in Islamic education that has strong relevance to efforts to build a harmonious social life in a pluralistic society. The findings of the study show that religious moderation is not only understood as a religious attitude that is in the middle (*wasathiyah*), but also as an educational paradigm that integrates the values of balance, justice, tolerance, and respect for diversity in social life. In the perspective of Islamic Education, the concept of *wasathiyah* is a normative foundation that emphasizes the importance of avoiding extreme attitudes, both in understanding religious teachings and in interacting with other groups.

Further analysis of the literature shows that the main values of religious moderation in Islamic education are manifested through the principles of *tawassuth* (middle way), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (justice). The value of *tawassuth* encourages students to avoid excessive attitudes in understanding and practicing religious teachings so that a mindset that is open to differences is created. Meanwhile, the value of *tasamuh* instills respect for the rights of other groups in carrying out their respective beliefs and traditions. The value of *i'tidal* teaches the importance of being fair and proportionate in looking at diverse social realities. Muaz and Ruswandi explained that these three values are the main foundations of religious moderation that need to be internalized through the Islamic Education curriculum. These findings are reinforced by the research of Mufi et al. which shows that the internalization of the value of religious moderation through education is able to increase active tolerance and strengthen social harmony in a multicultural environment. Thus, Islamic Education has a strategic position as a means of forming moderate characters who are able to adapt to the dynamics of a pluralistic society [21], [22].

In addition to religious moderation, the results of the study also found that social cohesion is an important element in building a harmonious and inclusive community life. Social cohesion is understood as a condition that shows social attachment, solidarity, a sense of belonging, and a shared commitment in a community. Based on the results of the literature synthesis, social cohesion is formed through four main dimensions, namely social solidarity, social integration, social trust, and social inclusion. Social solidarity refers to the ability of individuals and groups to support each other in achieving common goals. Social integration shows the level of interconnectedness between groups in a society so that existing differences do not develop into conflicts. Meanwhile, social trust is related to the level of trust between individuals and social institutions, while social inclusion reflects the openness of society in accepting and involving all social groups without discrimination.

The findings of the study show that social cohesion is not formed automatically, but requires a process of internalizing values that takes place systematically through education. In this context, Islamic education has a significant role because it not only functions as a means of transferring religious knowledge, but also as a medium for the formation of students' social character. Murdianto explained that Islamic education which is oriented towards the values of tolerance, respect for diversity, and social responsibility is

able to strengthen social solidarity in a multicultural society. The findings show that the success of Islamic education is not only measured from the cognitive aspect of religion, but also from its ability to form individuals who have social concern and commitment to common life [6].

The results of further research found a very close relationship between religious moderation and social cohesion. Religious moderation serves as a normative foundation that forms an inclusive attitude, while social cohesion is a social manifestation of the values of moderation that have been internalized in people's lives. In other words, the higher the level of religious moderation in a community, the greater the chance of creating strong social cohesion. Maksum et al. found that the application of the value of religious moderation contributes significantly to strengthening social solidarity, reducing identity conflicts, and increasing social integration in society. These findings show that religious moderation and social cohesion have mutually reinforcing relationships, where both are important elements in maintaining the social stability of plural societies [23].

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study strengthen and expand Émile Durkheim's theory of social integration. Durkheim explained that social order is built through the existence of shared values that bind members of society in a collective consciousness. In the context of a pluralistic society, the values of *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, and *i'tidal* internalized through the Islamic Education curriculum function as shared values that strengthen social solidarity. However, this study shows that the concept cannot be fully explained through mechanical solidarity as formulated by Durkheim, because plural societies are not built on the basis of uniformity of beliefs, but rather through the recognition of diversity of identities, dialogue between groups, and cooperation in the midst of differences. Therefore, social cohesion in the context of Islamic education is closer to the character of organic solidarity which relies on interdependence, respect for differences, and the integration of the values of religious moderation in the educational process.

These findings also expand on the results of Saskia et al. which shows that religious moderation contributes to strengthening social harmony in multicultural societies. The study describes the relationship between religious moderation and social harmony, but has not elaborated on the educational mechanisms that produce these relationships. This study shows that the relationship is mediated by the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum through changes in objectives, materials, learning strategies, and evaluations that internalize the values of *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, and *i'tidal* to form social solidarity, social trust, and social integration as a prerequisite for strengthening social cohesion [24].

On the other hand, this study also considers a more critical perspective on the development of religious moderation. A number of studies remind that when religious moderation is positioned solely as an instrument of state policy, there is a risk of reducing its meaning to administrative compliance without being accompanied by substantive internalization of values. In addition, social cohesion built without room for difference and critical dialogue has the potential to turn into social conformism that suppresses diversity of views. Therefore, the conceptual model developed in this study does not interpret social cohesion as a uniformity of identity, but as the ability to

build trust, cooperation, and respect for differences through a dialogical educational process. Thus, the theoretical contribution of this research lies not only in strengthening the relationship between religious moderation and social cohesion, but also in the formulation of a conceptual mechanism that explains how the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum produces both outputs while maintaining a balance between social integration and respect for plurality.

On the other hand, the results of the study also show that the biggest challenge in the implementation of religious moderation and social cohesion lies in the development of social polarization, digital disinformation, and the strengthening of identity politics in the public space. This phenomenon has the potential to hinder the process of internalizing the value of moderation because students live in a social environment that often shows intolerance and social segregation practices. Therefore, Islamic education is required to transform the learning paradigm from one that originally focused on normative and cognitive aspects to a more contextual, dialogical, and oriented approach to the formation of social character.

Based on the overall findings, this study confirms that religious moderation and social cohesion are two concepts that cannot be separated in an effort to build a harmonious plural society. Religious moderation provides a foundation of values that leads individuals to appreciate differences, while social cohesion is an indicator of the success of internalizing these values in social life. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in strengthening the argument that Islamic education has a strategic function as a bridge between the normative dimension of religion and the social needs of modern society. Meanwhile, its practical contribution lies in the importance of developing an Islamic Education curriculum that explicitly integrates the values of *wasathiyah*, *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, *i'tidal*, social solidarity, social trust, and social inclusion as part of efforts to build the social resilience of pluralistic communities. Further research can develop empirical studies on the implementation of these values at various levels of education to measure their effectiveness in strengthening social cohesion and preventing social polarization in the digital era.

Conceptual Model of Islamic Education Curriculum Transformation Based on Religious Moderation and Social Cohesion

The results of the literature analysis show that the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum is a strategic need in responding to the increasing complexity of pluralistic society's life. Various studies show that religious education is no longer sufficiently oriented towards mastering the cognitive aspects of religion, but must also be able to form students who have a tolerant, inclusive, and able to coexist in diversity. In this context, religious moderation is an important foundation for building a balance between religious commitment and respect for social differences. Mufi, Elhady, and Mursalim explained that the internalization of the value of religious moderation in education plays an important role in building active tolerance and social harmony in the school environment. These findings show that the Islamic Education curriculum needs to be directed at strengthening social values that support the creation of peaceful coexistence [22].

The data analysis also shows that the philosophical foundation of the curriculum transformation model rests on the Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil alamin*, multicultural education, and religious humanism. These three foundations place education as a means of shaping human beings who not only have religious competence, but also have social sensitivity to diversity. The Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil alamin* provides direction that Islamic teachings must be realized in the form of behavior that brings benefits to all humans. Meanwhile, multicultural education serves to develop awareness that diversity is a social reality that must be understood and appreciated. In this context, religious moderation is a bridge that connects religious values with the need to build a harmonious social life [25].

The findings of the study show that the sociological foundation of the model departs from the reality of a pluralistic society that faces the challenges of social polarization, intolerance, and the development of identity segregation in the digital space. Various studies show that the development of social media has expanded social interaction while increasing the risk of conflicts due to the dissemination of unverified information. In this situation, Islamic Education has the responsibility to strengthen social integration through instilling the value of moderation and respect for diversity. A bibliometric study conducted by Hasan and Juhannis in 2023 shows that the theme of religious moderation in education is growing rapidly because it is seen as one of the important approaches in maintaining social cohesion in an increasingly heterogeneous society [26].

The results of the literature synthesis further show that the transformation of curriculum objectives needs to be directed at the formation of students who are moderate and able to function as agents of social cohesion. This orientation requires a change in the educational paradigm from mere mastery of knowledge to the formation of social character. Students are expected to have the ability to build dialogue, respect differences, and resolve conflicts peacefully. This finding is in line with the research of Hully, Fadli, Irrubai, and Irwan 2024 which found that the internalization of the value of religious moderation is able to form a fair, balanced, and non-extreme attitude in social and religious life [27].

In the material aspect, this study found that the Islamic Education curriculum needs to integrate the themes of religious moderation, multicultural education, digital literacy, conflict resolution, and cross-cultural dialogue. These materials are seen as relevant to the challenges of contemporary society faced with increasing social polarization and the spread of hate speech in the digital space. Nasihuddin (2024) emphasized that the integration of religious moderation in Islamic Education is able to increase students' understanding of the importance of tolerance, peace, and inclusive social life. Therefore, learning materials need to be designed to not only develop religious understanding, but also build the social skills needed in a pluralistic society [28].

The findings of the study also show that the transformation of learning strategies is an important component in the developed model. Collaborative learning, dialogical-participatory, project-based learning, and problem-based learning approaches are seen as more effective than one-way learning approaches. Through this strategy, students gain direct experience in cooperating, dialogue, and solving social problems collectively. Sugianto, Muhaemin, and Karim show that moderation-based learning

developed through social interaction and local wisdom is able to strengthen students' tolerant and inclusive attitudes [29].

In addition, the results of the study show that evaluation transformation needs to be carried out so that the success of Islamic Education is not only measured through cognitive achievements. The evaluation also needs to include assessments of tolerance, social empathy, and social collaboration as indicators of the success of internalizing the values of religious moderation and social cohesion. This approach allows educational institutions to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the development of students' character.

Overall, this research produced a conceptual model of the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum that explains the mechanism of the relationship between curriculum components, internalization of the value of religious moderation, strengthening social cohesion, and preventing social polarization. This model is built on six main components, namely philosophical foundations, sociological foundations, goal transformation, materials, learning strategies, and evaluation. The six components were chosen because they represent the main elements of curriculum development that determine the direction, content, process, and learning outcomes so that they become the most strategic intervention point in the educational transformation process. In this model, the transformation of the curriculum component serves as an input that directs the process of internalizing the values of *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, and *i'tidal* through an integrated learning experience. The internalization of these values then becomes a causal mechanism that encourages the formation of social solidarity, social integration, social trust, and social inclusion as the main dimensions of social cohesion. Strengthening social cohesion then acts as a mediator that reduces the potential for social polarization through increasing cross-group dialogue, strengthening mutual trust, and developing an inclusive and civilized living culture.

Thus, the relationship between curriculum transformation and the prevention of social polarization does not take place directly, but is mediated by the internalization of the value of religious moderation and the strengthening of social cohesion as a mechanism of social change. Based on this mechanism, the conceptual model of this research is formulated into three propositions, namely: P1, transformation of goals, materials, learning strategies, and evaluation in the Islamic Education curriculum to increase the internalization of the values of *tawassuth*, *tasamuh*, and *i'tidal*; P2, internalizing the value of religious moderation strengthens social cohesion through increasing social solidarity, social integration, social trust, and social inclusion; and P3, strengthening social cohesion reduces the potential for social polarization through strengthening social harmony, cross-group dialogue, and community resilience to identity-based conflicts. This model shows that the Islamic Education curriculum not only functions as a learning tool, but also as an instrument of social transformation that links the formation of religious character with the strengthening of social integration in a pluralistic society.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that social polarization in pluralistic societies is not only influenced by political,

cultural, and digital technology developments, but also by the suboptimal role of education in internalizing values that support inclusive social life. In this context, the Islamic Education curriculum has a strategic position as a preventive instrument to build the character of students who are moderate, tolerant, and able to coexist in diversity. The findings of the study confirm that religious moderation and social cohesion are two interrelated components and need to be systematically integrated in the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum.

The main contribution of this research lies in the development of a conceptual model of the transformation of the Islamic Education curriculum that integrates religious moderation and social cohesion as a framework for preventing social polarization. In contrast to previous research that tends to examine religious moderation, social cohesion, or partial curriculum development, this study offers a conceptual synthesis that places goals, materials, learning strategies, and evaluation as a single unit directed at strengthening social integration in a plural society. This model expands the perspective of the Islamic Education curriculum from a mere transmission of religious knowledge to a social engineering instrument oriented towards the formation of social harmony.

Theoretically, this study enriches the treasures of Islamic Education curriculum studies through the integration of curriculum transformation theory, religious moderation, and social cohesion in one conceptual model. In practical terms, the resulting model can be a reference for curriculum developers and educational institutions in designing learning that is more responsive to the challenges of diversity and social polarization. In terms of policy, these findings indicate the importance of strengthening religious moderation and social cohesion as a strategic orientation in the development of the Islamic Education curriculum at various levels of education.

Based on these findings, further research needs to test the validity and implementation of this model through empirical studies in schools, madrasas, and universities. In addition, it is necessary to develop an evaluation instrument that is able to measure the achievement of religious moderation and social cohesion as an indicator of curriculum success. This step is important so that the conceptual model offered not only has theoretical relevance, but also makes a real contribution to strengthening social resilience and preventing polarization in pluralistic societies.

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