

Islamic Education Based Moderation as a Counter Narrative to Contemporary Social Intolerance

Wildan Miftahussurur¹, Ibnu Imam Al Ayyubi^{2*}, Nurhikmah³, Alamul Huda Almuzakky⁴

¹ Institut Agama KH Yazid Karimullah, Jember, Indonesia

² Institut Darul Falah Bandung Barat, Indonesia

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Indonesia

⁴ Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia

*ibnuimam996@indaf.ac.id

Abstrak

Moderasi merupakan strategi penting dalam menghadapi tantangan keberagaman sosial di berbagai komunitas modern. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis moderasi keagamaan sebagai narasi tandingan terhadap intoleransi di kalangan masyarakat. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis interaktif melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa moderasi keagamaan tidak hanya dipahami sebagai konsep normatif, tetapi terwujud dalam praktik kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat melalui sikap toleransi, saling menghargai, dan tidak memaksakan kehendak dalam perbedaan keyakinan maupun praktik keagamaan. Perbedaan antar dan intra umat beragama, seperti antara kelompok NU dan PERSIS, disikapi secara damai melalui dialog dan penghormatan terhadap keyakinan masing-masing. Intoleransi dipandang lebih banyak bersumber dari ego keagamaan dan klaim kebenaran sepihak. Moderasi keagamaan berfungsi sebagai mekanisme sosial untuk meredam potensi konflik dan menjaga harmoni sosial. Penelitian ini juga menegaskan pentingnya peran tokoh agama, tokoh masyarakat, serta literasi digital dalam menghadapi narasi intoleransi di era media sosial. Dengan demikian, moderasi keagamaan menjadi strategi sosial yang relevan untuk memperkuat persatuan dan keharmonisan masyarakat plural.

Kata kunci : Moderasi Keagamaan, Intoleransi, Toleransi, Harmoni Sosial.

Abstract

Moderation is an important strategy in facing the challenges of social diversity in various modern communities. This study aims to analyze religious moderation as a counter-narrative to intolerance within society. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that religious moderation is not merely understood as a normative concept but is manifested in everyday social practices through tolerance, mutual respect, and the refusal to impose religious beliefs on others. Differences both interfaith and intra-faith, such as those between NU and PERSIS communities,

How to Cite

Miftahussurur, Wildan *et.al.* (2026). Islamic Education Based Moderation as a Counter Narrative to Contemporary Social Intolerance. *Al-Bustan: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3 (1).

Published by



Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Bustanul 'Ulum Lampung Tengah

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

are managed peacefully through dialogue and respect for individual convictions. Intolerance is largely perceived as stemming from religious ego and exclusive truth claims rather than from religious teachings themselves. Religious moderation thus functions as a social mechanism to prevent conflict and maintain social harmony. The study also highlights the crucial role of religious leaders, community figures, and digital literacy in countering intolerant narratives in the era of social media. Therefore, religious moderation serves as a relevant social strategy for strengthening unity and cohesion in a pluralistic society.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Intolerance, Tolerance, Social Harmony.

Submitted: December 27, 2025, Approved: January 22, 2026, Online Date: March 14, 2026, Published: March 17, 2026

Introduction

Moderation is an important strategy in facing the challenges of social diversity in various modern communities. Indonesia is a country with various ethnicities, religions, and cultures¹. This religious moderation emphasizes the concept of a balanced religious attitude² and tolerance in social life³, so as to create good social relations and reduce religious-based social conflicts. Recent research shows that this religious moderation has a positive impact on social relations and peace in the context of a diverse society, through the application of the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation between religious groups⁴. The implementation of religious moderation has not yet been fully implemented. This also faces obstacles, such as the influence of globalization, radicalism, and social inequality that can divide society⁵. This study also emphasizes the important role of religious leaders and community leaders in implementing and strengthening moderation practices. However, this still requires government support to facilitate the implementation of these moderation practices.

Although there has been much research on religious moderation, such as a study on religious moderation among Gen Z, which shows that religious⁶. Furthermore, many other studies mostly focus only on specific roles, such as

¹ (Khilmi et al., 2024)

² (Arikarani et al., 2024)

³ (Sirangki et al., 2023)

⁴ (Rizwan, 2024)

⁵ (Fikri & Warseto, 2024)

⁶ literacy can influence attitudes in academic settings, there is still little research that specifically describes the experiences of the general public in everyday life (Faradhillah, 2024)

educators, religious leaders, and so on. There is little research that specifically explores the broader social experiences of society, including local religious and cultural factors that shape the context of religious⁷.

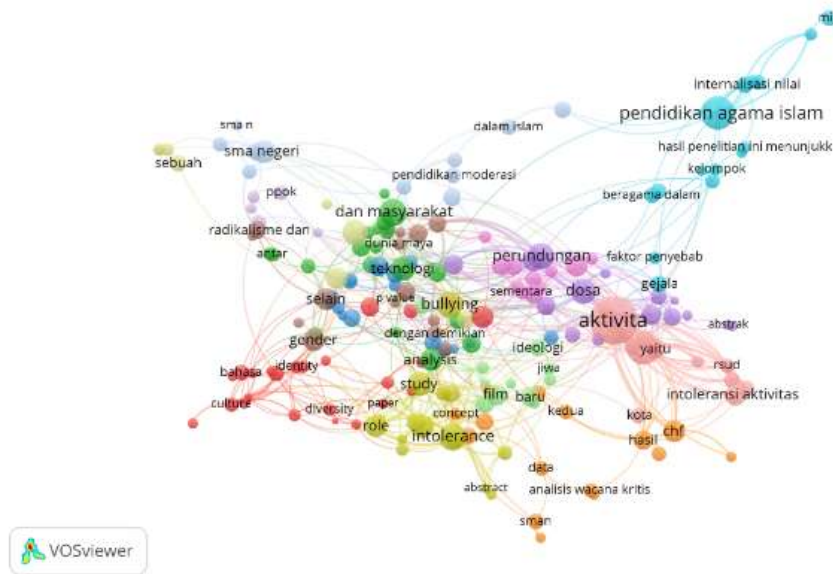


Figure 1. Analysis Results VOSViewers

This research gap has become a new focus for the study of religious moderation in society. Most studies focus on specific groups, without incorporating the perspective of society in general and the more complex dynamics of social life that can influence moderate attitudes and behavior⁸. This highlights the importance of research that focuses on the experiences of the community as key actors in social life, who can shape and maintain religious moderation. Therefore, this study aims to provide a more in-depth empirical contribution by directly exploring the experiences, understanding, direct practice, and obstacles to religious moderation in social life.

Although numerous studies have examined religious moderation within formal educational institutions and policy frameworks, limited attention has been given to how religious moderation is interpreted, negotiated, and practiced at the grassroots community level. Most existing research tends to focus on normative discourse, curriculum development, or state-driven initiatives, leaving a gap in

⁷ moderation (Tamimi et al., 2025)

⁸ (Bahri, 2024)

understanding the lived experiences of society in translating moderation values into everyday social interactions. Furthermore, there is still insufficient empirical exploration of the practical challenges, cultural dynamics, and local strategies that shape the success or failure of moderation initiatives in real social contexts. This study addresses that gap by offering a community-centered perspective that highlights how religious moderation operates beyond formal institutional settings.

Therefore, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how society interprets religious moderation, how these values can be realized in daily social interactions, and the obstacles and successes in implementing them. The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of more community-focused research on religious moderation and can serve as a strategic reference for strengthening the values of religious moderation in social life, including tolerance, harmonious coexistence, and social cohesion.

Method

This study used qualitative methods to collect data, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of religious moderation among the community. This qualitative method was chosen because this research focuses more on the meaning, experience, and understanding of the community in practicing religious life⁹. Qualitative methods are used to examine real objects, where the researcher plays the role of the main character and data is collected in depth through direct interaction with the research subjects¹⁰. This method is relevant to use, because religious moderation is very appropriate for complex and contextual social phenomena, so it cannot be explained solely quantitatively. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative research, which aims to systematically describe the social reality related to the understanding and practice of religious moderation in society. This research does not aim to test temporary assumptions, but rather to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the values of religious moderation are interpreted and applied in social interactions in everyday life. The research subjects were determined using a purposive sampling technique, namely

⁹ (Sinaga, 2023)

¹⁰ (Sulistiyo, 2023)

the direct selection of informants based on certain considerations. Informants were chosen because they were considered to have understanding, experience, and direct involvement in religious practice. religious moderation in society.

This study collected data using in depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews provided insights into informants' understanding and experiences regarding religious moderation. Observations were then conducted to directly observe how religious moderation is practiced in society. Documentation was conducted to fulfill relevant research data archives. The use of various data collection techniques aims to increase data validity¹¹. Qualitative data analysis was conducted using an interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was carried out continuously from data collection until the research was completed. Qualitative data analysis is inductive, meaning conclusions are drawn based on patterns and themes emerging from field data. Data validity is maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as cross-checking of data with informants to ensure that the research results align with the social reality being studied¹².

Results and Discussion

Result

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with informants who work as housewives, it was found that the informant's daily life is not only carrying out domestic activities such as taking care of the house, cooking, and caring for children. But it also involves intense social interactions with the surrounding environment, in this context, domestic and social spaces become important arenas for the formation of moderate religious values. The informant interprets harmonious living as a peaceful and serene social condition , where differences in religion or differences in religious views are not used as a reason to break up community unity. The results of the interview with the informant with the initials D, can be quoted as follows:

¹¹ (Nurfajriani et al., 2024)

¹² (Nurfajriani et al., 2024)

"Living in harmony means living in peace and tranquility , even though we have different beliefs. But we remain united and part of a community. When we see religious differences, we must simply tolerate them according to our respective beliefs."

Differences are understood as something natural and inherent in social life, so we need to respond to them with mutual respect and appreciation. The informant's understanding of interfaith harmony is seen from direct experience in community life. The informant stated that differences in beliefs should not be a source of conflict, because the goal of living in society is to create a sense of security and comfort for all parties. The informant also revealed differences in religious views within the Muslim community, particularly regarding worship practices and religious traditions such as tahlilan. Differences in views between the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Persatuan Islam (PERSIS) groups were acknowledged to have emerged in the community, but did not develop into open conflict. The informant explained that each group practices its own beliefs without coercing or demeaning the other. This attitude of mutual tolerance and respect is seen as a form of religious maturity that is important for maintaining social harmony. The results of the interview with the informant with the initials D can be quoted as follows:



Figure 1. The source listens to interview questions

"We just tolerate each other's beliefs, respect and honor them. It's exactly the same for mothers when they attend tahlilan . " It's not allowed and not practiced. For example, if someone in the family is NU and my mother is, we don't force it. So, each person follows their own beliefs."

The source also assessed that intolerance generally arises from religious ego, namely the feeling that one's own beliefs are the most correct and must be followed

by others. According to the source, this ego can trigger tension and conflict if left unchecked. Therefore, the source emphasized the importance of tolerance and mutual understanding in religious life. Differences in belief are likened to differences in taste, which should not be debated, let alone contradicted. The following quote:

"According to my mother, ego can cause religious conflict. Some people feel they're right and we have to follow what they say. In everyday life, we like tea, while others like milk. We can't force others to like what we like, so we should each be tolerant and respectful."

In social life within the community, informants observed concrete practices that support harmony, such as mutual respect for religious and social activities across organizations, including PERSIS and NU. Attendance at these activities is not understood as a form of recognition of other beliefs, but rather as a manifestation of social respect and an effort to maintain good relations between residents. This practice demonstrates that social interaction can be an effective means of strengthening community solidarity.

The resource person emphasized the importance of religious and community leaders in maintaining harmony. These figures are seen as role models who have a significant influence in shaping societal attitudes. When religious leaders teach the values of tolerance and togetherness, people tend to follow them and use them as guidelines in their daily lives. Conversely, if religious leaders are indifferent, the potential for social conflict is considered to increase. The resource person highlighted the influence of social media in shaping societal religious attitudes. According to the resource person, not all religious information circulating on social media is educational and soothing; some is provocative and tends to marginalize certain groups. This situation has the potential to influence how people view differences and weaken tolerance. Therefore, the resource person emphasized the importance of being selective and critical in receiving religious information from social media. The following can be quoted:

"Social media has a significant influence on the formation of religious attitudes in society, as it often contains indoctrinating information. People

often encourage or force people to convert to their religion, such as, ' Let's just convert to my religion,' even though that's not permitted. So, we must remain steadfast in our own beliefs."

As a hope for the future, the speaker envisions a society that is increasingly religiously mature, able to appreciate differences, refrain from imposing their will, and prioritize unity and harmony. The speaker also believes that by reducing egos and strengthening mutual respect, a peaceful and harmonious society can be maintained despite the diversity of beliefs and religious views. The following can be quoted:



Figure 2. The informant answers interview questions

"The hope is that people will be more respectful and not force their will. For example, in other neighborhoods, birthday celebrations are popular, but here, it's not allowed. Let them be. " If they want a birthday, that's up to them, we don't yeah "It's okay. If we're invited, we'll come. If we're not , that 's okay , don't force us."

Discussion

This study found that religious moderation is not only understood as an abstract concept but also manifested in everyday life in society. The meaning of living in harmony conveyed by the informants aligns with the concept of religious moderation , which emphasizes balance, tolerance, and mutual respect. Religious moderation positions differences as an unavoidable social reality that must be managed wisely to prevent conflict. This aligns with research by Nurlaili, which

asserts that religious moderation is an important foundation for maintaining social harmony in a pluralistic society¹³.

The interviewee's attitude of not imposing beliefs and respecting differences in religious practices reflects the principle of *tasamuh* or tolerance within the principle of religious moderation. This principle emphasizes the importance of respecting the rights of others to practice their beliefs without pressure or coercion. The differences in religious views between the NU and PERSIS groups, which were responded to peacefully by the community, indicate that religious moderation also serves as a counter-narrative to selfish attitudes and justifying what they say or do. In this context, religious moderation functions as a social mechanism to reduce the potential for intra-religious conflict¹⁴. This is in line with research findings¹⁵ which state that moderate attitudes within religious communities contribute significantly to maintaining social stability.

The interviewee's perspective on religious ego as a source of intolerance reinforces the argument that religious conflict often stems not from religious teachings themselves, but from how individuals or groups interpret and express their beliefs. Religious moderation presents itself as an approach that balances commitment to personal beliefs with respect for the beliefs of others¹⁶. This approach is considered effective in building a peaceful and harmonious society. The role of religious and community leaders highlighted by the interviewee is also in line with various studies that place local figures as key figures in strengthening religious moderation¹⁷.

Religious leaders serve not only as religious transmitters but also as social mediators capable of mitigating conflict and fostering dialogue between groups. Research¹⁸ confirms that the success of religious moderation is strongly influenced by the exemplary behavior of religious leaders at the community level. Furthermore, findings regarding the influence of social media indicate that religious moderation

¹³ (Nurlaili et al., 2024)

¹⁴ (Miftahul, 2024)

¹⁵ (Sari et al., 2025)

¹⁶ (Azmi et al., 2024)

¹⁷ (Pikahulan & Mangar, 2024)

¹⁸ (JANAH et al., 2024)

faces new challenges in the digital era¹⁹. The rapid and unfiltered flow of information has the potential to strengthen intolerant narratives if not balanced with adequate digital literacy. Research by Al Hariri emphasizes that digital literacy is a crucial component in efforts to strengthen religious moderation, particularly in filtering provocative religious content²⁰.

Thus, the findings of this interview indicate that religious moderation is not merely understood at the level of discourse, but has been translated into concrete attitudes and practices in people's daily lives. It is reflected in patterns of social interaction characterized by mutual respect, openness to differences of opinion, willingness to engage in dialogue, and the prioritization of peaceful solutions when tensions arise. In communal activities, religious events, and neighborhood relations, moderation manifests in inclusive participation and recognition of diversity as a social reality that must be managed constructively rather than denied.

However, the realization of religious moderation is not without challenges. The digital era presents significant obstacles, particularly through the rapid spread of misinformation, hate speech, identity-based polarization, and algorithm-driven echo chambers that reinforce exclusivist views. Social media often amplifies provocative narratives more quickly than messages of tolerance, making communities vulnerable to misunderstanding and horizontal conflict. In this context, maintaining moderation requires not only strong religious understanding but also digital literacy, critical thinking, and collective awareness to filter information responsibly.

Therefore, religious moderation functions not only as a normative theological concept rooted in ethical and spiritual teachings, but also as a practical and adaptive social strategy. It provides a framework for navigating pluralism, preventing conflict, and strengthening solidarity across religious, cultural, and social differences. By embedding moderation in everyday interactions and community structures, society is better equipped to preserve harmony, foster mutual trust, and reinforce social cohesion amidst the complexities of contemporary diversity.

¹⁹ (Kumowal, 2024)

²⁰ (Al Hariri et al., 2024)

Conclusion

This study concludes that religious moderation functions as a strategic counter-narrative to intolerance in pluralistic societies, serving not merely as a normative concept but as a practical attitudinal framework that enables individuals to uphold their beliefs while respecting differences. Moderate attitudes are shaped through everyday social interactions grounded in tolerance, mutual respect, and non-coercion, which help prevent conflict and reduce exclusivist truth claims. The effectiveness of strengthening religious moderation is strongly influenced by the exemplary roles of religious and community leaders, as well as society's capacity to critically navigate digital information in the face of intolerant narratives. Therefore, religious moderation must be continuously reinforced through experience-based approaches, tolerance education, and the enhancement of religious and digital literacy to sustain social harmony and unity amid diversity. Future research is recommended to explore religious moderation through comparative studies across different regions or socio-cultural contexts, employ mixed-method or quantitative approaches to measure its social impact more systematically, and examine the role of digital platforms and youth engagement in shaping contemporary moderation narratives.

References

- Ahmad Mukhtar, Ruslaini, Sukma Erita, Rahmawati Shoufiah, Wakib Kurniawan, and Naufal Qadri Syarif. *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Jln. Sungai Lareh No.26, Kel. Lubuk Minturun, Kec. Koto Tangah, Kota Padang, Sumatera Barat: AIKOMEDIA PRESS, 2024.
- Al Hariri, M. A. M., Ma'ruf, M. A., & Huda, S. A. (2024). Moderasi Beragama: Peluang dan Tantangan di Era Digital. *Salimiya: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Keagamaan Islam*, 5(2), 151–158. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58401/salimiya.v5i2.1401>
- Arikarani, Y., Azman, Z., Aisyah, S., Ansyah, F. P., & Kirti, T. D. Z. (2024). Konsep Pendidikan Islam Dalam Penguatan Moderasi Beragama. *Edification Journal: Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 7(1), 71–88. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37092/ej.v7i1.840>

- Azmi, K., Munte, R. N. B., Rangkuti, S., Sanjaya, M. B., Sunanta, D., & Cipta, H. (2024). Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama Dalam Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Umat Dan Menyeimbangkan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Di Desa Suka Jadi. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Digital*, 1(3), 165–175. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.70248/jpmebd.v1i3.1254>
- Bahri, S. (2024). Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Terhadap Upaya Pemahaman Moderasi Beragama Bagi Peserta Didik Studi Kasus SMA Negeri 1 Pomalaa. *Eduagama: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Sosial Keagamaan*, 10(2), 135–152. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32923/edugama.v10i2.4056>
- Faradhillah, N. (2024). Enforcing Religious Moderation Among Generation Z Muslims in the Digital Era Through Critical. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 12(2), 2332–2349. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v12i2.5996>
- Fikri, H. K., & Warseto, A. (2024). Religious Moderation As A Mechanism Of Social Stability In A Multicultural Context: Study Of The Sasak Community. *Tahiro: Journal of Peace and Religious Mederation*, 1(2), 83–100. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20414/tahiro.v1i2.11780>
- Ismail, H. (2025). Relevansi Konsep Hukum Islam Dalam Menyikapi Isu-Isu Sosial Kontemporer: Sebuah Tantangan Moderasi Beragama. *Moderasi: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 5(1), 259–278. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54471/moderasi.v5i1.100>
- Janah, A. M., Hidayati, A. U., & Maulidin, S. (2024). Pengaruh pemahaman moderasi beragama terhadap pembentukan sikap toleransi siswa SMK Walisongo Semarang. *VOCATIONAL: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Kejuruan*, 4(2), 42–50. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51878/vocational.v4i2.4133>
- Khilmi, D. A. K., Findy, R. A., Isviana, P. S., & Radianto, D. O. (2024). Multikulturalisme Dalam Kehidupan Sosial Masyarakat Indonesia. *JOURNAL SAINS STUDENT RESEARCH*, 2(2), 167–172. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61722/jssr.v2i2.1193>
- Kumowal, R. L. (2024). Moderasi Beragama Sebagai Tanggapan Disrupsi Era Digital. *DA'AT: Jurnal Teologi Kristen*, 5(2), 126–150. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51667/djtk.v5i2.1739>

- Miftahul, I. (2024). Pendekatan Moderasi Beragama dalam Mengatasi Konflik Sosial. *JOURNAL J-MPI: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan, Penelitian Dan Kajian Keislaman*, 3(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.63353/journaljmpi.v3i2.306>
- Nurfajriani, W. V., Ilhami, M. W., Mahendra, A., Afgani, M. W., & Sirodj, R. A. (2024). Triangulasi data dalam analisis data kualitatif. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 10(17), 826–833. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13929272>
- Nurlaili, N., Fitriana, F., Millah, C. U., & Nasution, E. M. (2024). Moderasi beragama di Indonesia: Konsep dasar dan pengaruhnya. *Moderation: Journal of Religious Harmony*, 1(1), 19–24. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47766/moderation.v1i1.2707>
- Pikahulan, M. S. A., & Mangar, I. (2024). Peran tokoh agama dalam mendorong moderasi beragama di Kota Ambon. *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya*, 7(3), 691–705. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v7i3.5344>
- Rizwan, M. (2024). The relationship between religion and social cohesion in multicultural societies. *Journal of Management and Social Sciences Review*, 2(2), 8–23. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.70670/1hj5dc34>
- Sari, H., Sazali, H., & Faridah, F. (2025). Culturally Based Religious Moderation Communication in Bagansiapiapi for Interfaith Harmony. *INJECT (Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication)*, 10(2), 93–120. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18326/inject.v10i2.4736>
- Sinaga, D. (2023). *Buku Ajar Metodologi Penelitian (Penelitian Kualitatif)*. UKI press. <http://repository.uki.ac.id/id/eprint/12468%0A>
- Sirangki, H., Payung, M. R., & Allo, A. A. (2023). Memaknai Toleransi Secara Teologis Sebagai Upaya Moderasi Beragama. *Jurnal Teologi Pambelum*, 3(1), 88–96. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59002/jtp.v3i1.57>
- Sulistiyo, U. (2023). *Metode penelitian kualitatif*. PT Salim Media Indonesia.
- Tamimi, C., Emzinetri, E., & Astarini, D. (2025). Society and Religious Moderation: Strategies of Community and Religious Leaders in Enhancing Adolescents'

Religious Motivation. *Jurnal Indonesia Studi Moderasi Beragama*, 2(1), 13–23.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.64420/jismb.v2i1.211>