

Multicultural Education and Religiosity on Students' Religious Moderation

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural education and religiosity are two factors that may contribute to the development of inclusive and tolerant attitudes among students. This study therefore analyze the partial and simultaneous effects on students' religious moderation at MA Bustanul Ulum Banyuputih Kidul Jatiroto Lumajang. Using an associative quantitative design, data were collected from 65 female tenth-grade students selected through single-stage cluster sampling, with closed 4-point Likert scale questionnaires, and analyzed in IBM SPSS 25.0. The results show, first, that multicultural education has a significant positive effect on religious moderation ($t = 3.358$; $p = 0.001 < 0.05$). Second, religiosity also has a significant positive effect ($t = 3.164$; $p = 0.002 < 0.05$). The regression equation is $Y = 6.862 + 0.503X_1 + 0.441X_2$, and the two variables together significantly influence religious moderation. In conclusion, integrating multicultural values with deep religious adherence effectively strengthens students against radicalism and intolerance in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: Multicultural Education, Religiosity, Religious Moderation, Islamic Senior High School

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a pluralistic nation rich in cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity (Suroyo et al., 2023; Polhaupessy et al., 2025). This social diversity is both a national treasure and a major challenge that must be managed wisely, particularly in the educational realm (Adamu, 2023; Zainuddin, 2023). The emergence of primordialism, fundamentalism, and even radicalism, which have the potential to trigger inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict, demonstrates the need to strengthen attitudes of tolerance and moderation from an early age in educational institution (Zuhriah, 2020). Schools and madrasas play a strategic role as platforms for character development in students, fostering an inclusive, humanistic, and welcoming understanding of religion (Zuhri et al., 2026).

The problem is not only national but also visible at the school level. At MA Bustanul Ulum Banyuputih Kidul Jatiroto Lumajang, students and teachers come from Javanese, Madurese, and Malay backgrounds. Initial observations show that learning is generally conducive, yet students sometimes form ethnic-based groups and engage in verbal bullying related to ethnicity (Ihda et al., 2025). These incidents are small in scale, but if they are not addressed systematically and on the basis of evidence, they may develop into more serious intolerance (Mohammady et al., 2025). The core problem is therefore that daily interactions among ethnically diverse students already show early signs of exclusion, while the factors that could strengthen students' religious moderation have not been empirically examined in this setting.

At MA Bustanul Ulum Banyuputih Kidul Jatiroto Lumajang, ethnic diversity is evident in the backgrounds of students and teaching staff, who are Javanese, Madurese, and Malay. Based on initial observations, the learning process is generally conducive. However, there are still instances of students engaging in ethnic-based grouping and verbal bullying related to ethnicity (Ihda et al., 2025). Although small-scale, these dynamics, if not addressed

scientifically and systematically, have the potential to develop into more concerning intolerance (Mohammady et al., 2025).

Religious moderation is a conceptual and practical response to this problem. In Islam, it is rooted in the principle of *ummatah wasathan*, the middle community, as stated in Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 143 (Shihab, 2002; Yansah et al., 2025). This *wasathiyah* stance balances justice with firmness of principle and avoids both literal-radical extremism and liberal-permissive extremism (Yuda et al., 2026). It also places respect for human dignity above sectarian identity (Masykur et al., 2024). Two factors are strongly suspected of shaping students' religious moderation: multicultural education and religiosity (Meilina et al., 2025; Marpaung et al., 2024).

Multicultural education is a reform-oriented educational process that aims to give students from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and gender backgrounds equal opportunities to learn (Banks, 1993). Banks conceptualizes it through five dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. Together these dimensions help students develop inclusive attitudes (Sibawaihi et al., 2025). Empirically, Oktavia & Torro (2021) found that multicultural education has a positive effect on students' tolerance.

In an Islamic madrasah, multicultural education does not mean setting religious teachings aside. It means drawing on the Islamic values already taught there, such as *ta'aruf* (mutual recognition among peoples and tribes, Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ta'awun* (cooperation), and justice, so that ethnic diversity among students is seen as part of God's design rather than a source of division. In practice, this includes integrating cultural diversity into Islamic subjects, teaching teachers and students to examine ethnic stereotypes critically, treating students from all ethnic groups fairly in teaching and school rules, and building a school culture that discourages ethnic grouping and bullying (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024; Aderibigbe et al., 2023).

Religiosity is the extent to which a person believes in, understands, practices, and lives by their religious teachings. It can be described through five dimensions: (1) belief, which refers to acceptance of the core doctrines of the faith; (2) practice, which includes worship and religious obligations, such as prayer, fasting, and recitation; (3) experience, which involves feelings of closeness to God and spiritual awareness; (4) knowledge, which refers to understanding religious teachings and sources; and (5) consequences, which concern the influence of religious values on everyday behavior, including honesty, responsibility, and attitudes toward others.

These dimensions have been tested and discussed in later research (Gibbs & Crader, 1970). Mature religiosity is not only about ritual obedience. It is also expressed in tolerance and ethical conduct toward others, which is why it is expected to relate to religious moderation. Previous studies support this expectation: (Syahputra & Lao, 2023) and Priliyanti & Al-Fath (2024) found a positive influence of religiosity on religious moderation.

Earlier studies have mostly examined these variables separately. Studies that test multicultural education and religiosity together as predictors of religious moderation among madrasah students, especially in an ethnically diverse madrasah or pesantren-based setting, remain limited. Testing them together shows how much each variable contributes on its own and how much they contribute jointly.

This study addresses three questions: (1) How much does multicultural education influence the religious moderation of students at MA Bustanul Ulum Banyuputih Kidul? (2) How much does religiosity influence their religious moderation? (3) Do multicultural education and religiosity together have a positive and significant influence on students' religious moderation? Accordingly, the study aims to provide empirical evidence of the individual and combined contributions of these two variables to the formation of moderate character.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative (correlational) design (Soesana et al., 2023). The design fits the research problem for three reasons. First, the research questions ask how much Multicultural Education (X1) and Religiosity (X2) influence Religious Moderation (Y). Associative research is built to test the direction and strength of relationships between variables. Second, all three variables are educational and psychological constructs that can be measured with numerical instruments such as questionnaires, so the hypotheses can be tested through statistical analysis (Machali, 2021). Third, no variable is manipulated. Students' experiences of multicultural education and their religiosity already exist in the madrasah, so an experiment is neither necessary nor feasible. Multiple regression analysis can then estimate the separate and joint contributions of X1 and X2 to Y.

Respondent

The population is all 203 students of MA Bustanul Ulum Banyuputih Kidul Jatiroto Lumajang, distributed across three grade levels:

Table 1. Respondent

Grade	Number of students
X	65
XI	70
XII	68
Total	203

The students share these characteristics: (1) they are madrasah aliyah (senior secondary) students of Islamic faith, aged roughly 15 to 18; (2) they come from Javanese, Madurese, and Malay ethnic backgrounds; and (3) they study in the same institution under the same curriculum and school culture. The study used single-stage cluster sampling. Cluster sampling is suitable when a population is already organized into natural groups, as students are here by grade level. The procedure had three steps: 1) Defining the clusters: The population was divided into three clusters: Grade X (65 students), Grade XI (70 students), and Grade XII (68 students). 2) Selecting the cluster. One cluster was selected. 3) Determining the sample. All students in the selected cluster became respondents.

Grade X was the selected cluster, so the sample is 65 students. Using an intact group is practical, because the students are already together and the questionnaire can be administered at one time. Grade X is also a relevant group, since these students had recently received material on religious moderation in the Madrasah Student Ta'arruf Period (MATSAMA) and are at the initial stage of character formation at the aliyah level. Because the sample comes from one grade level, the findings cannot be generalized to Grades XI and XII or to all 203 students. This is a limitation of the study.

Instruments

The research variables are operationally defined as follows:

Multicultural Education (X1): A conscious effort to develop students' understanding and tolerance of equality of status, race, ethnicity, and culture among fellow schoolmates. Indicators include reducing prejudice, cooperation and mutual respect, awareness of diverse education, and inclusive behavior (14 statement items).

Religiosity (X2): Obedience and appreciation of Islamic teachings manifested in real behavior. Indicators include belief in Aqaid 50, consistency in praying 5 times a day, zakat/infaq, understanding of Islamic law, sense of responsibility, honesty, solemnity in prayer, and fear of sinning (15 statement items).

Religious Moderation (Y): Students' moderate attitude (wasathiyah) in respecting differences in ethnicity, religion, and culture and upholding

humanitarian values. Indicators include national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodating local culture (16 statement items).

Data collection used a closed-ended questionnaire with a modified Likert scale with 4 answer options (Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1). The neutral answer option was removed to anticipate respondents' tendency to choose safe answers when in doubt (Kurtulus et al., 2026)(Kankaraş & Capecchi, 2025).

Procedures

The research stages carried out by researchers include the following:

Conceptual Stage, including:

Identifying the Problem

Literature Review

Defining the Theoretical Framework

Formulating Hypotheses

Research Design and Planning Stage

Selecting a research design

Identifying the population

Specifying methods for measuring research variables

Designing a sampling plan

Conducting the research

Creating research data instruments

Data Collection

Data Analysis

Calculating data results

Finalization Stage

Drawing conclusions from the research results

Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Version 25.0 for Windows. The analysis procedures included: (1) Instrument testing (Pearson Product Moment correlation validity test and Cronbach's Alpha reliability test), (2) Classical assumption testing (One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, Tolerance & VIF multicollinearity test, and Scatterplots heteroscedasticity test), and (3) Multiple linear regression analysis, t-test (partial), F-test (simultaneous), and coefficient of determination (R^2) (Alfiyah et al., 2025; Harniati et al., 2025).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Statistical Description of Research Variables

Based on the processing of questionnaire data from 65 respondents, descriptive statistics were obtained for each variable as presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables (N = 65)

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Multicultural Education (X1)	65	42	57	52.60	3,161
Religiosity (X2)	65	45	61	57.36	3,393
Religious Moderation (Y)	65	48	64	58.60	3,948

Multicultural Education scores ranged from 42 to 57 ($M = 52.60$, $SD = 3.161$). Religiosity scores ranged from 45 to 61 ($M = 57.36$, $SD = 3.393$). Religious Moderation scores ranged from 48 to 64 ($M = 58.60$, $SD = 3.948$). The standard deviations are small relative to the means, so scores are fairly homogeneous across respondents. The mean scores are high relative to the

possible score range of each instrument, which suggests that students generally perceive multicultural education in their madrasah positively, show good religiosity, and hold moderate religious attitudes.

Data Quality Testing (Validity and Reliability)

Instrument validity testing with Pearson Product Moment correlation at $N = 65$ and $\alpha = 0.05$ produced an r_{table} value of 0.2441. The test results showed that all statement items in the variables of Multicultural Education (14 items, r_{count} 0.258–0.683), Religiosity (15 items, r_{count} 0.413–0.735), and Religious Moderation (16 items, r_{count} 0.320–0.735) had an r_{count} value $> r_{table}$ (0.2441) and $sig. < 0.05$. Thus, all instrument items were declared valid.

Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficient values of 0.770 for Multicultural Education, 0.863 for Religiosity, and 0.816 for Religious Moderation. Since all Cronbach's Alpha values were > 0.60 , all variables were declared reliable and consistent in measuring the phenomena studied.

Classical Assumption Test

The multiple linear regression model must meet three main classical assumption test requirements:

Normality Test: Based on the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.100. This value is greater than 0.05 (0.100 > 0.05), which indicates that the residual data is normally distributed.

Multicollinearity Test: The calculation results show a Tolerance value for variables X1 and X2 of 0.550 (> 0.10) and a VIF value of 1.818 (< 10.00). This proves that there is no multicollinearity problem between the independent variables.

Heteroscedasticity Test: Scatterplots graph analysis shows a pattern of data points spread randomly above and below the number 0 on the Y axis without forming a certain regular pattern. This indicates that the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity problems.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to predict the magnitude of change in the Religious Moderation variable (Y) based on the Multicultural Education (X1) and Religiosity (X2) variables. The estimated regression coefficient results are presented in Table 3:

Table 3. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and t-Test (Partial)

Model / Variable	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6,862	1,842	3,725	0.000
Multicultural Education (X1)	0.503	0.150	3,358	0.001
Religiosity (X2)	0.441	0.139	3,164	0.002

Based on Table 2, the multiple linear regression equation is obtained as follows:

$$Y = 6.862 + 0.503 X1 + 0.441 X2$$

The regression equation provides mathematical and practical meaning as follows:

Constant Value ($a = 6.862$): If Multicultural Education (X1) and Religiosity (X2) have a value of 0 or constant, then the basic value of student Religious Moderation is 6.862 units.

Multicultural Education Regression Coefficient ($b1 = 0.503$): Has a positive value, meaning that every increase in the Multicultural Education score by 1 unit will increase the Religious Moderation score by 0.503 units, assuming the Religiosity variable has a constant value.

Religiosity Regression Coefficient ($b_2 = 0.441$): Has a positive value, meaning that every 1 unit increase in the Religiosity score will increase the Religious Moderation score by 0.441 units, assuming the Multicultural Education variable has a fixed value.

Hypothesis Testing (t-Test and F-Test)

Hypothesis testing was conducted to prove the partial influence (t test) and simultaneous influence (F test) between variables:

Partial Influence of Multicultural Education on Religious Moderation (H1): Based on the results of the t test, the t_{count} value was obtained at 3.358. This value is greater than t_{table} ($3.358 > 1.669$) at $df = 62$ and a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The p -value (sig.) is $0.001 < 0.05$. So H_{01} is rejected and H_{a1} is accepted. This empirically proves that Multicultural Education has a positive and significant partial effect on students' Religious Moderation.

Partial Influence of Religiosity on Religious Moderation (H2): The t_{count} value for the Religiosity variable is 3.164. Because $t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}}$ ($3.164 > 1.669$) and p -value (sig.) is $0.002 < 0.05$, then H_{02} is rejected and H_{a2} is accepted. This proves that Religiosity has a positive and significant partial effect on students' Religious Moderation.

Simultaneous Effect of Multicultural Education and Religiosity on Religious Moderation (H3): The results of the ANOVA test (F test) show $F_{\text{count}} > F_{\text{table}}$ with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Then H_{03} is rejected and H_{a3} is accepted. This confirms that Multicultural Education and Religiosity together (simultaneously) have a positive and significant effect on students' Religious Moderation at MA Bustanul Ulum Banyuputih Kidul.

Hypothesis Testing (t-Test and F-Test)

Partial test (t-test).

H1: Multicultural Education has a positive and significant effect on Religious Moderation. $t_{\text{count}} = 3.358 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.669$ ($df = 62$, $\alpha = 0.05$), with $p = 0.001 < 0.05$. H_{01} is rejected and H_{a1} is accepted.

H2: Religiosity has a positive and significant effect on Religious Moderation. $t_{\text{count}} = 3.164 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.669$, with $p = 0.002 < 0.05$. H_{02} is rejected and H_{a2} is accepted.

Simultaneous test (F-test).

Table 4. Table 4

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	df
[= 0.71]	[= 0.51]	[= 0.49]	[= 32.3]	2, 62

F_{count} exceeds F_{table} (3.15 at $df = 2, 62$, $\alpha = 0.05$) with $p < 0.05$, so H_{03} is rejected and H_{a3} is accepted. Multicultural Education and Religiosity together have a positive and significant effect on students' Religious Moderation at MA Bustanul Ulum Banyuputih Kidul. The R^2 value indicates that about [51%] of the variance in Religious Moderation is explained by the two variables. The remaining [49%] is explained by factors outside this model (e.g., family environment, teachers, peers, and media).

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the effects of Multicultural Education and Religiosity on the Religious Moderation of 65 Grade X students at MA Bustanul Ulum Banyuputih Kidul Jatiroto Lumajang. The findings indicate that Multicultural Education has a significant positive effect on Religious Moderation ($B = 0.503$; $p = 0.001$), supporting the first hypothesis. Religiosity also has a significant positive effect ($B = 0.441$; $p = 0.002$), supporting the second hypothesis. Furthermore, both variables simultaneously have a significant positive effect on Religious Moderation ($F = 32.313$; $p < 0.001$), supporting the third hypothesis. Together, they explain

51% of the variance in Religious Moderation ($R^2 = 0.510$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.495$), while the remaining 49% is attributable to other factors. These findings suggest that madrasahs should integrate multicultural values into Islamic education and school culture while strengthening students' religious understanding and practices. Future research should examine additional factors, involve multiple schools and grade levels, and incorporate qualitative or observational methods. Given the correlational design and single-grade sample, the findings do not establish causation or support broad generalization.

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