

Assessment of Character and Religious Moderation Among Students: A Study on Learning Evaluation in Islamic Religious Education

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Abstract:

The growing phenomenon of intolerance and radicalization, which increasingly threatens the world of education in Indonesia, has created an urgent need to strengthen character assessment and religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This study aims to examine the concepts and techniques of character education assessment and religious moderation in PAI. The method used is qualitative research with a literature review approach through a search of sources from Scopus, Publish or Perish, and Google Scholar, with descriptive data analysis through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The review identified an integrated evaluation framework for Islamic Religious Education that combines cognitive, affective, and psychomotor assessment with the internalization of Islamic values and religious moderation. The framework synthesizes authentic assessment techniques, including structured observation, self- and peer-assessment, reflective journals, portfolios, project-based assessment, simulations, and standardized psychometric instruments, according to their respective strengths and limitations. Rather than relying on a single assessment method, the findings demonstrate that triangulating multiple assessment techniques provides a more valid, comprehensive, and continuous evaluation of students' religious character and religious moderation, particularly in assessing tolerance, anti-violence attitudes, national commitment, and respect for cultural diversity.

Abstrak:

Fenomena intoleransi dan radikalisasi yang semakin mengancam dunia pendidikan di Indonesia mendorong kebutuhan mendesak akan penguatan penilaian karakter dan moderasi beragama dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji konsep dan teknik penilaian pendidikan karakter serta moderasi beragama dalam PAI. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka melalui penelusuran sumber dari Scopus, Publish or Perish, dan Google Scholar, dengan analisis data secara deskriptif melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil kajian menghasilkan suatu kerangka evaluasi terintegrasi dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam yang menggabungkan penilaian ranah kognitif, afektif, dan psikomotor dengan internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam dan moderasi beragama. Kerangka tersebut mensintesis berbagai teknik asesmen autentik, yaitu observasi terstruktur, penilaian diri dan teman sebaya, jurnal reflektif, portofolio, penilaian berbasis proyek, simulasi, serta instrumen psikometrik sesuai dengan kelebihan dan keterbatasan masing-masing. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan satu teknik penilaian tidak mampu menggambarkan moderasi beragama secara utuh, sehingga diperlukan triangulasi berbagai teknik asesmen untuk

menghasilkan evaluasi yang lebih valid, komprehensif, dan berkelanjutan terhadap karakter religius peserta didik, khususnya dalam mengukur toleransi, komitmen kebangsaan, penolakan terhadap kekerasan, dan penghargaan terhadap keberagaman budaya.

Keywords:

Assessment Concepts, Character Assessment, Religious Moderation, Islamic Religious Education, Assessment Echniques.

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Introduction

Indonesia is one of the most diverse countries in the world, comprising more than 17,000 islands, over 300 ethnic groups, and more than 700 languages and dialects (Afifuddin, Amri, Latif, Rosmini, & Tahir, 2025; Aji, Winata, Koto, Cahyawijaya, Romadhony, Mahendra, Kurniawan, Moeljadi, & Prasojo, 2022). The diversity of Indonesian society creates conditions that are highly prone to social conflict if not properly managed (Salamah, Nugroho, & Nugroho, 2020). The phenomena of intolerance and radicalization in Indonesia have become serious threats that are beginning to infiltrate the education sector. The results of a 2023 survey conducted by the Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace in five cities, Bandung, Bogor, Surabaya, Surakarta, and Padang, revealed an increase in the number of high school students who are actively intolerant. Compared to a similar survey conducted in 2016, the percentage of students who were actively intolerant rose from 2.4% to 5.6%, while the percentage of students exposed to such attitudes increased from 0.3% to 0.6%. Furthermore, 83.3% of students surveyed viewed Pancasila as not being a permanent state ideology and believed it could be replaced, while 56.3% supported the exclusive implementation of Islamic Sharia as the basis of the state (Wardah, 2023).

Various conflicts carried out in the name of religion continue to occur frequently in Indonesia and are influenced by a range of factors, including low levels of religious literacy, which make the public more susceptible to misinformation and provocative narratives spread by certain individuals for personal or political gain (Salamah, Nugroho, Nugroho, 2020). This situation is exacerbated by the fact that, although Indonesia experienced no acts of terrorism during 2023–2024, the ideology of terror and violence against those perceived as different has not completely disappeared but has instead spread online. The

National Counterterrorism Agency reported that 2,264 social media accounts had disseminated more than 10,000 pieces of content related to terrorist activities (Damayanti, 2025). Social media has become a factor accelerating the spread of radical ideology among the younger generation, sometimes leading individuals to accept misleading information as truth without realizing that social media is being used as a tool for propaganda or to influence them into believing that their actions are justified (Wibowo & Hadiningrat, 2023).

The process of spreading radical ideology is relatively easy because the primary targets are school and university students who are still in the formative stages of developing their worldview and character. Radical groups exploit this situation to spread propaganda that contradicts the state ideology and the values of Pancasila (Sangihe, 2023). The spread of radical ideology in schools can also occur due to weak oversight of religious activities involving external instructors. On the other hand, teachers play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes toward tolerance; thus, intolerant views introduced into the classroom have the potential to influence students' perspectives (Wardah, 2023).

Furthermore, inadequate religious education can hinder the development and strengthening of character education and religious moderation. This situation is characterized by the suboptimal transmission of moderate religious values, educators' character, and an educational environment that is not sufficiently supportive, as well as weak oversight of the implementation of religious moderation (Ikhwan, Azhar, Wahyudi, & Alfiyanto, 2023). Islamic education fundamentally aims not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to develop learners' innate potential (*fitrah*) in a holistic manner, encompassing spiritual, intellectual, social, and moral dimensions. Through this holistic orientation, Islamic education prepares students to fulfil their roles as servants of Allah and vicegerents (*khalifah*) on earth while cultivating noble character and responsible social conduct (Latif, Widodo, Purnawati, Alamsyah, & Sahra, 2025). Therefore, strengthening PAI instruction oriented toward the values of religious moderation is of utmost importance (Nadhif, Sirojuddin, & Hakim, 2025). Assessment serves as a reinforcing element of the learning process because it ensures that students truly internalize these values and develop into religious, tolerant Muslims of noble character (Fazillah, 2024). Effective PAI instruction requires assessment to ensure the successful implementation of character education and religious moderation. Assessment in PAI instruction is not merely an academic evaluation mechanism but also serves as a means of shaping students' character to become tolerant, open-minded, and inclusive (Taufik, Djollong, Lestari, Hamran, & Syamsuriah, 2025). The implementation of assessment faces two main challenges: the subjectivity of teachers' evaluations and time constraints resulting from administrative burdens. Both challenges can be addressed through the use of standardized instruments, the involvement of more than one evaluator, data triangulation based on observations, self-assessment, and peer assessment, as well as school policies that provide adequate opportunities for character assessment within the education system (Barokah & Muniroh, 2025).

Previous studies on character variables and religious moderation in the context of assessment in Islamic Education (PAI) have evolved in various directions. Earlier studies generally focused on the correlation between character and learning outcomes (Astuti, Susanti, Yusnaldi, Budiman, Arsyad, & Setyawan, 2024), teaching strategies for religious moderation (Saepudin, Supriyadi, Surana, & Asikin, 2024), religious moderation assessment in higher education curricula (Mukhibat, Effendi, Setyawan, & Sutoyo, 2024), and character-building assessment. However, no study has specifically mapped assessment techniques for these two aspects in a systematic and comparative manner. Bibliometric analyses indicate a scarcity of studies on moderation-based assessment techniques in Islamic education (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024), as well as the absence of systematic guidelines for assessing religious moderation in the higher education context (Muhsin, Kususiyanah, & Maksum, 2024). Given this gap, the researchers aim to present a PAI assessment framework that comparatively integrates assessment techniques for character education and religious moderation, along with the strengths and limitations of each technique, as a practical guide that is not yet available in the existing literature.

Based on the phenomena and issues outlined above, this study is crucial for conducting an in-depth examination of the concepts and assessment techniques for character education and religious moderation in Islamic education as a strategic effort to address the challenges of intolerance and radicalization in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies, which have generally discussed the concepts of character education and religious moderation separately, this research seeks to comprehensively map assessment techniques for both aspects while identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each technique, thereby serving as a practical reference for PAI teachers in designing sustainable assessment practices.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using a literature review approach. A literature review is a written synthesis drawn from various sources, such as journal articles, books, and other documents, that describes the current and past state of knowledge regarding the research topic under study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Data were collected through a documentary study, which involved reviewing various sources. The data sources consisted of primary literature, including books, journal articles, and news reports related to PAI assessment, particularly those discussing character education and religious moderation. The tools used to search for relevant sources included Scopus, Publish or Perish, and Google Scholar. Data were analyzed descriptively through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Data reduction was performed to select relevant information, data presentation was organized in the form of a conceptual narrative, and conclusions were drawn by interpreting the findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of character assessment and religious moderation assessment in PAI. Thus, this research method provided a theoretical understanding while establishing a conceptual foundation for

teachers and educational practitioners in conducting character assessment and religious moderation assessment in PAI instruction.

Result and Discussion

The Concept of Character Assessment in Islamic Religious Education

Assessment in Islamic Education aims to develop two fundamental aspects of students' potential. Their human potential is nurtured so that they can fulfill their role as stewards on Earth, while their divine potential is developed so that they can realize themselves as sincere servants devoted to worshiping Allah SWT. In practical terms, assessment evaluates students' qualities across two dimensions simultaneously: the vertical dimension, reflected in their faith, knowledge, and worship of Allah SWT; and the horizontal dimension, evident in their relationships with others, themselves, and nature through the application of Islamic law and noble moral conduct (Ananda & Rafida, 2023). The assessment of students' character is a crucial component of education, particularly in PAI. Educational assessment, in general, is defined as a process involving the evaluation of program goal attainment and the efficiency of its implementation. Specifically, in the context of learning, it refers to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to determine the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes, including character development (Ilyas & Suriyani, 2025).

Character is developed through the stages of knowledge, action, and habit formation. Therefore, character assessment must begin by defining the specific character traits to be achieved, which are elaborated through the hierarchy of moral development: knowing, feeling, and acting (Salirawati, 2021). The assessment of character education programs can utilize the Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model developed by Stufflebeam as a decision-oriented approach to help educational administrators or managers comprehensively evaluate the success of character education programs, from the context of needs, resource inputs, and implementation processes to the final outcomes achieved by students (Lelono, 2023). In the context of PAI, character assessment not only measures academic achievement but also encompasses religious values such as honesty, responsibility, sincerity, consistency, and humility, which are fundamental principles in the Islamic scholarly tradition. This concept emphasizes that assessment in Islamic education is not merely a tool for measuring cognitive abilities but also a means of fostering moral and spiritual development grounded in the value of sincerity in worshiping Allah SWT (Lisnawati, Kumalasari, Subagiya, & Syarifuddin, 2026).

Character assessment adheres to three main principles: the principle of objectivity, based on actual data rather than assumptions; the principle of continuity, whereby assessment is conducted consistently to determine the achievement of educational goals; and the principle of comprehensiveness, which covers all aspects of students' personalities, including the affective and psychomotor domains. These three principles serve as the conceptual foundation that must be upheld, particularly in the assessment of PAI learning, so that assessment does not become limited to cognitive measurement alone

(Hamidah, Ilham, Fadhil, Arsela, & Nazib, 2026). At the national policy level, the concept of character assessment is implemented through the Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment instrument, which is designed to map the quality of the education system, including a character survey component based on five core character values: religiosity, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity. This concept emphasizes that Islam-based character education encompasses moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions that are explored and developed based on Islamic values (Yusrianum & Nurmawati, 2023).

Collectively, the reviewed literature demonstrates that character assessment in Islamic Religious Education extends beyond the measurement of cognitive achievement to encompass the holistic development of learners' moral, spiritual, and social competencies. Although the studies approach assessment from different perspectives, including educational evaluation, moral development theory, program evaluation, assessment principles, and national policy, they converge on the view that character assessment should be continuous, comprehensive, and evidence-based. Furthermore, the literature consistently emphasizes that effective character assessment integrates the dimensions of moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions with Islamic values, enabling teachers to evaluate not only what students know but also how these values are internalized and manifested in their daily behavior. This synthesis indicates that character assessment in PAI functions as an integral educational process aimed at fostering students' personal transformation and strengthening their identity as morally responsible individuals and faithful servants of Allah SWT. Consequently, the assessment framework in PAI should combine authentic assessment strategies, systematic evaluation procedures, and Islamic ethical principles to ensure that character development is measured in a valid, holistic, and meaningful manner.

Character Assessment Techniques in Islamic Religious Education

Character education assessment can be conducted through six methods. First, direct observation is used to monitor individual behavior in real-life situations, whether in the classroom, social environments, or extracurricular activities. Second, questionnaires and surveys are used to explore individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and understanding of character values. Third, portfolios serve as a collection of evidence documenting an individual's character development over time. Fourth, peer assessment allows individuals to provide feedback to one another, thereby encouraging self-reflection. Fifth, group discussions or focus groups involving various stakeholders are conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the application of character values. Sixth, program evaluation is carried out through comprehensive data analysis to identify the program's strengths and weaknesses as a basis for continuous improvement (Mardiyanto, Inayah, & Asmara, 2023). The various assessment techniques used to evaluate students' character are as follows.

First, observation techniques involve the direct observation of students' behavior in the classroom, the school environment, or at home. Teachers observe students' engagement in learning, interactions with peers, attitudes, sense of responsibility in group tasks, as well as concern for others (Ilyas & Suriyani, 2025). In the context of PAI,

observations can focus on students' religious practices, discipline, and honesty as indicators of internalized religious values.

Second, self-assessment and peer-assessment techniques in character-based PAI instruction are used to evaluate students' affective aspects in a more participatory manner. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviors, while peer assessment provides a social perspective on how character values such as honesty and cooperation are manifested in daily interactions (Hamidah, Ilham, Fadhil, Arsela, & Nazib, 2026).

Third, the journal or anecdotal note technique involves written records created by teachers while observing students' behavior related to specific character values. This technique is considered important because verbal assessments of attitudes without written documentation are unreliable and lack objectivity. Therefore, journals or anecdotal notes serve as a more accurate basis for determining students' character profiles, including their progress in religious devotion within PAI learning (Handayani, Muti'ah, Yulia, & Havifah, 2023).

Fourth, the national-scale competency assessment, namely the Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment or Asesmen Kompetensi Madrasah Indonesia (AKMI), is used by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to assess madrasah students' reading literacy, numeracy, science literacy, and sociocultural literacy while also incorporating a character survey component based on religious values, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity (Yusrianum & Nurmawati, 2023). This technique is relevant to PAI because its results can be used by teachers and madrasahs to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, including those related to character, as a basis for improving learning.

Fifth, portfolio assessment and project-based assessment are used to assess students' learning achievements on an ongoing basis through a collection of their work or assignments (Hamidah, Ilham, Fadhil, Arsela, & Nazib, 2026; Lisnawati, Kumalasari, Subagiya, & Syarifuddin, 2026). In character-based PAI instruction, portfolios and projects can be used to assess students' consistency, accuracy, and honesty in completing assignments. Projects in PAI involve practical religious activities and routine behaviors such as congregational prayer, reciting the Asmaul Husna, giving charity, and engaging in polite social interactions. This technique positions the teacher's exemplary conduct as both an evaluative tool and a character-building instrument, as emphasized by the saying that one act of setting a good example is more meaningful than a thousand pieces of advice.

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that no single assessment technique is sufficient to comprehensively evaluate students' character development in Islamic Religious Education. Instead, the literature consistently supports the use of multiple complementary assessment techniques, combining direct observation, self- and peer-assessment, anecdotal records, portfolios, project-based assessment, and standardized character surveys to capture the multidimensional nature of character. These techniques collectively assess not only observable behaviors but also students' self-awareness, social

interactions, consistency in religious practices, and long-term moral development. The findings further suggest that authentic and continuous assessment is more appropriate than one-time evaluations because character is gradually formed through repeated experiences and habitual behavior. Consequently, effective character assessment in PAI requires an integrated assessment system that triangulates evidence from various sources, actively involves students in the assessment process, and aligns assessment practices with Islamic values, thereby producing a more valid, holistic, and meaningful representation of students' character development.

The Concept of Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education

Religious moderation is a concept that has received increasing attention in the field of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly in the context of PAI. A proper understanding of this concept serves as the primary foundation for designing instruction and assessment aimed at fostering students' character to be moderate, tolerant, and inclusive. Based on a review of the literature, the following key concepts of religious moderation among students in PAI are outlined. Religious moderation in the context of PAI essentially stems from the teachings of Islam itself, particularly the concept of *wasathiyah*, which signifies balance, justice, and the middle path in religious practice. This concept is affirmed in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 143, which states that Muslims are designated as a moderate community. In PAI instruction, the principle of *wasathiyah* serves as both an ethical reference and a philosophical foundation for fostering students' religious attitudes that do not incline toward either extremism or excessive liberalism (Ahadi, & Sugeng, 2025; Madhar Amin, 2024; Taufik, Djollong, Lestari, Hamran, & Syamsuriah, 2025).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has formulated four indicators of religious moderation that serve as guidelines for PAI education: (1) national commitment, which embodies the values of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) in religious life; (2) tolerance, which refers to the ability to accept differences and respect followers of other religions; (3) opposition to violence, namely the rejection of all forms of violence committed in the name of religion; and (4) openness to local culture, namely the willingness to accept local traditions as long as they do not conflict with the principles of Sharia (Ahadi & Sugeng, 2025; Rofiah & Jasminto, 2023). These four indicators form an operational conceptual framework for integrating the values of religious moderation into the PAI curriculum and assessment. PAI focused on religious moderation must not only target the cognitive domain but must also comprehensively encompass three domains: the cognitive domain, which involves a deep understanding of Islamic teachings as a source of mercy for all creation (*rahmatan lil alamin*); the affective domain, which includes attitudes of tolerance, openness, and respect for differences; and the psychomotor domain, which emphasizes concrete behaviors that reflect the values of moderation in social interactions. In the context of PAI, these three domains serve as both learning objectives and dimensions that must be assessed comprehensively (Taufik, Djollong, Lestari, Hamran, & Syamsuriah, 2025).

The concept of religious moderation in PAI cannot be realized solely through the transfer of knowledge but requires genuine exemplary behavior from teachers. PAI teachers serve not only as educators but also as role models of moderate religious values. The success of implementing religious moderation depends heavily on teachers' competence in designing assessment instruments that reflect a balance between cognitive and affective aspects. The ultimate goal of internalizing religious moderation in PAI is to foster a generation with *wasathiyah* character, one that is intellectually capable, spiritually mature, and open to differences, so that they can contribute to the creation of a peaceful and harmonious society.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education is a multidimensional construct grounded in the Islamic principle of *wasathiyah* and operationalized through the four indicators established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs: national commitment, tolerance, opposition to violence, and openness to local culture. These dimensions are not merely conceptual values but are intended to be internalized through balanced learning experiences encompassing cognitive understanding, affective dispositions, and psychomotor behaviors. The studies further emphasize that the successful implementation of religious moderation depends on the integration of curriculum, authentic assessment, and teachers' exemplary conduct, as these elements collectively shape students' religious attitudes and behaviors. This synthesis suggests that religious moderation in PAI should be understood as a holistic educational framework that integrates Islamic theological principles with civic and multicultural values, enabling students to develop balanced religious identities, respect diversity, and contribute constructively to social harmony in a pluralistic society.

Assessment Techniques for Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education

Students' understanding of the concept of religious moderation is assessed through three complementary domains: attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In the attitude domain, assessment is conducted through direct observation of students' tolerance and openness during discussions and daily interactions; self-assessment and peer assessment, which encourage students to reflect on the application of the principles of religious moderation in themselves and their social environment; and reflective journals, which allow students to document their experiences in applying the values of religious moderation, thereby enabling teachers to gain insight into students' attitudes that may not always be apparent during classroom activities.

In the knowledge domain, students' conceptual understanding is measured through written tests in the form of essay or multiple-choice questions that require them to explain the principles of religious moderation and their application in real-world contexts. This is supplemented by research projects on issues of cultural and social diversity in the surrounding community to assess students' critical analysis skills, as well as presentations of research findings that evaluate both their substantive understanding and communication skills. In the skills domain, the practical application of the values of religious moderation is assessed through practical projects that encourage students to

design and carry out activities promoting diversity and inclusivity at school, portfolios that document students' skill development over time along with their personal reflections, as well as simulations and role-playing exercises that place students in conflict or decision-making situations to assess their ability to apply the principles of religious moderation in context (Rusydiyah, Ummah, & Rahman, 2024). Assessing students' religious moderation in PAI requires a comprehensive and diverse approach, given that the assessment objectives encompass the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains simultaneously. The following are relevant assessment techniques for religious moderation that can be applied in the context of PAI.

First, the observation technique is one of the most fundamental methods for assessing students' religious moderation. PAI teachers directly observe students' behavior and interactions in their daily school life to assess the extent to which they demonstrate tolerant, open-minded attitudes and respect for differences. Attitude assessment is conducted through teachers' observations of students' daily activities, with teachers providing guidance and advice whenever students exhibit behavior that is inconsistent with the principles of religious moderation (Sholikah, 2022). In a more formal PAI context, observations can be conducted using structured observation sheets that include indicators of religious moderation, such as a willingness to engage in dialogue, respectful attitudes toward differences, and the rejection of violence (Ahadi & Sugeng, 2025; Taufik, Djollong, Lestari, Hamran, & Syamsuriah, 2025).

Second, peer-assessment techniques allow students to evaluate one another's attitudes toward religious moderation honestly and constructively. In PAI, this technique is highly relevant because it fosters collective awareness of the values of moderation while helping students develop the ability to give and receive feedback in a moderate and mature manner. Peer assessment is more effective in detecting changes in students' attitudes toward tolerance in a more authentic way than one-way teacher assessment (Aluf, Bukhori, & Bashith, 2024). Based on the reviewed literature, attitude assessment should not merely record students' general behavior but should specifically evaluate behaviors reflecting religious moderation in sensitive situations. Therefore, observation and peer-assessment rubrics may include indicators such as students' willingness to respect differing religious opinions during classroom discussions, rejection of discriminatory or hate-based language, openness to collaborating with peers from different religious or cultural backgrounds, and peaceful responses to disagreements. Reflective journals may further assess students' empathy, awareness of personal prejudice, and ability to relate the Islamic teachings of *wasathiyah* to real-life experiences involving diversity. These indicators enable teachers to distinguish between superficial compliance and the genuine internalization of moderation values.

Third, project-based assessment or contextual assignments provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the values of religious moderation in real-life situations. Projects that PAI teachers can design include writing essays on the role of moderate Muslims in a multicultural society, creating vlogs about religious moderation, or conducting case studies on social conflicts and their peaceful resolution (Ahadi & Sugeng,

2025). Project-based assignments have been shown to encourage students to apply the values of moderation directly in school activities, thereby fostering mutual respect among students (Aluf, Bukhori, & Bashith, 2024). Assessing cross-cultural and interfaith collaborative projects, such as school tolerance festivals or interfaith dialogues, is also considered highly effective in fostering tolerant and inclusive character (Taufik, Djollong, Lestari, Hamran, & Syamsuriah, 2025). Project-based assessment should employ clear performance rubrics that evaluate students' ability to translate moderation values into authentic actions. Assessment indicators may include planning collaborative activities involving students from diverse backgrounds, demonstrating inclusive communication, rejecting violent or discriminatory behavior during simulations, and proposing peaceful conflict-resolution strategies grounded in Islamic teachings. Portfolios may document students' sustained participation in tolerance-building activities, while simulation rubrics can assess decision-making processes, empathy, and respect for diversity when students are confronted with cases involving intolerance or religious conflict.

Fourth, the reflective journal technique is an assessment tool that explores students' spiritual awareness and humanistic values through a process of written self-reflection. PAI teachers can ask students to write about their experiences interacting with peers from different religious or cultural backgrounds and then reflect on the values of tolerance, empathy, and respect they gained from those experiences (Taufik, Djollong, Lestari, Hamran, & Syamsuriah, 2025). This reflective process encourages students to think critically and introspectively while helping teachers understand the depth of students' understanding of the values of religious moderation. Fifth, psychometric scale-based techniques provide a more objective, consistent, and standardized means of measuring students' attitudes toward religious moderation. The Thurstone equal-appearing interval scale is used to measure attitudes toward religious moderation across four dimensions: national commitment, tolerance, opposition to violence, and accommodation of local culture (Halik, Khumairo, & Yawisah, 2022). When an instrument is both valid and reliable, it is suitable for consistent use as a tool for measuring attitudes toward religious moderation. In the context of PAI, such a standardized instrument can be adapted to measure students' levels of religious moderation across various educational levels while also serving as a needs assessment tool for designing programs to strengthen religious moderation in schools. The development of an instrument to assess tolerance using a Likert scale, validated by linguists, attitude assessment experts, and learning method experts, has proven to be more suitable for measuring students' tolerance accurately than teachers' informal observation notes (Rifky & Hardini, 2021).

The reviewed literature suggests that each assessment technique for religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education possesses distinct strengths and limitations, indicating that no single method can comprehensively evaluate students' religious moderation. Observation provides authentic evidence of students' actual behaviors and interactions in natural settings; however, its findings may be influenced by teacher subjectivity and are often limited to observable behaviors. Peer assessment encourages

honesty, collaboration, and mutual accountability while offering perspectives that teachers may overlook; however, it is susceptible to friendship bias and inconsistent judgments among students. Reflective journals enable teachers to explore students' internal values, empathy, and critical self-awareness, although the quality of reflection largely depends on students' writing abilities and willingness to express their genuine thoughts. Project-based assessment effectively measures the application of moderation values in real-life contexts and promotes higher-order thinking and collaboration, but it requires considerable time, careful planning, and clear assessment rubrics to ensure objectivity. In contrast, psychometric instruments provide standardized, reliable, and comparable measurements of attitudes toward religious moderation, making them suitable for large-scale assessment; nevertheless, they primarily capture self-reported attitudes rather than actual behaviors and therefore may not fully represent students' character in everyday situations. Collectively, these findings indicate that the strengths of one assessment technique compensate for the limitations of another. Therefore, an integrated assessment framework that combines authentic observation, reflective practices, collaborative assessment, contextual performance tasks, and standardized instruments offers a more valid, reliable, and holistic evaluation of students' religious moderation. Such a multidimensional approach enables teachers not only to assess students' conceptual understanding of moderation but also to monitor the internalization and consistent practice of moderate religious values in their daily lives.

Conclusion

This study concludes that character assessment and religious moderation assessment in PAI are two complementary components in shaping students who are both religious and moderate. Conceptually, character assessment in PAI aims to develop students' *insaniyah* and *ilahiyyah* potential, encompassing a vertical dimension reflected in the practice of faith and worship of Allah SWT and a horizontal dimension reflected in noble conduct toward others and nature. Character assessment is founded on three core principles: objectivity, continuity, and comprehensiveness, with character development progressing through the stages of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Religious moderation in PAI is grounded in the principle of *wasathiyah*, as stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 143, and is operationalized through four indicators established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation of local culture. PAI instruction oriented toward religious moderation must integrate the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains simultaneously, with teachers serving as both educators and role models of moderate religious values.

Technically, character assessment in PAI is conducted through observation, self-assessment, peer assessment, anecdotal journals, portfolios, projects, and the Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (*Asesmen Kompetensi Madrasah Indonesia [AKMI]*). Religious moderation assessment is carried out through structured observation, peer assessment, contextual projects, reflective journals, and psychometric scales. The ultimate

goal is to foster a generation with wasathiyah character that is spiritually mature and open to differences. PAI teachers are encouraged to employ diverse assessment techniques beyond written tests. Educational institutions should develop standardized assessment instruments to enhance objectivity. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct empirical studies examining the effectiveness of these assessment techniques and to develop practical assessment guidelines for PAI teachers across different educational levels.

Ethical Statement

This study was based exclusively on a review of published literature and did not involve human participants, animals, or the collection of personal or confidential data. Therefore, ethical approval and informed consent were not required. All sources used in this study were appropriately acknowledged and cited in accordance with academic and research integrity standards.

CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement

- **Author 1:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Investigation; Data Curation; Writing – Original Draft.
- **Author 2:** Conceptualization; Supervision; Formal Analysis; Writing – Review & Editing.
- **Author 3:** Investigation; Literature Review; Data Curation; Validation; Writing – Review & Editing.
- **Author 4:** Formal Analysis; Visualization; Validation; Writing – Review & Editing.
- **Author 5:** Resources; Investigation; Project Administration; Writing – Review & Editing.
- **Author 6:** Validation; Funding Acquisition; Writing – Review & Editing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this article.

Data Availability

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available upon reasonable request

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