



Designing A Religious Moderation Learning Model for Islamic Early Childhood Education

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ABSTRACT

Religious moderation is increasingly emphasized in Islamic early childhood education (PAUD/RA), yet teachers often lack practical, age-appropriate steps to translate values such as cooperation, peaceful conflict resolution, and respect for differences into daily learning. This study aimed to develop a contextual learning model to support religious moderation instruction in an Islamic PAUD setting. Using Plomp's (2013) Educational Design Research framework, the study proceeded through preliminary research, prototyping, and assessment. It was conducted at RA Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an, Kutai Timur Regency, East Kalimantan, involving the school head, teachers, and children selected purposively. Data were gathered through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of lesson plans (RPPH), teaching materials, and learning media. The resulting prototype organises learning into five steps: problem orientation using topics or objects close to children's lives; story presentation drawing on the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholars' exemplars; message discussion; contextualisation to everyday situations; and reflection and conclusion. Expert validation involved three experts in early childhood education, religious moderation, and learning design, and the results indicated high feasibility across content feasibility, language, presentation, and graphics (4.50–4.58; M = 4.54/5). The experts recommended deeper reflective prompts, richer early childhood-appropriate examples of cooperation across differences, a greater variety of learning media, and more inclusive graphics; all recommendations were incorporated into the revised model. The model provides a classroom-ready flow and an observation tool covering tolerance, collaboration, anti-violence, and respect for differences; broader trials are recommended to test effectiveness and further validate the instrument.

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1. Introduction

Religious moderation in Islamic early childhood education (PAUD) has become a strategic focus in character education because it shapes children's moral, ethical, and spiritual foundations while supporting inclusive attitudes in everyday social relations. Early childhood is often described as a "golden age" in which children are highly sensitive to values conveyed through interaction, stories, and adult modelling. For that reason, a clear understanding of how moderate religious education is integrated within the education system is not a minor detail; it is the basis for designing learning strategies that work in real classrooms in Islamic early childhood environments.

Research consistently shows that religious and moral learning for young children needs to be planned and delivered in ways that feel close to children's world. Perdana & Ngadiman (2019) argue that effective early religious education combines a systematic approach with play and exploration that match developmental characteristics. Similarly, Hasbullah & Sanusi (2023) describe Qur'an-based education that internalises religious teachings through daily learning activities, strengthening character and helping prevent moral crises later in life. These studies point to

the same direction: structured religious learning can be integrated into holistic development, as long as it is developmentally relevant.

Children's early social experiences also matter because value formation is shaped by the relationships surrounding them. Saiful (2023) highlights that the quality of children's social interactions is influenced by their perceptions of teachers, peers, and family environments, which makes early childhood educators central in building a climate that supports moral and spiritual growth. Subqi et al. (2022) add that humanist-religious education in madrassas can foster the protection of children's rights when learning experiences are responsive to emotional needs and ethical understanding. In other words, moderation values are more likely to grow when classrooms prioritise child-sensitive interaction, not only verbal advice.

Beyond school, the literature also reminds us that parents remain pivotal in children's religious learning. Prucnal-Wójcik (2024) reports that many European countries share a national consensus on parental responsibility in guiding children's religious education despite cultural differences. While the context differs, the implication is relevant: schools cannot work in isolation. Moderate religious education becomes stronger when schools, families, and communities communicate consistent messages and habits.

The teacher, therefore, is not merely delivering content but facilitating values, and this role requires sustained professional support. Wang (2023) notes that comprehensive training, reflective practice, and strong knowledge mastery are prerequisites for improving the effectiveness of moderate religious education. Alongside this, approaches such as gamification and technology integration can help maintain children's involvement while supporting learning outcomes in contemporary settings (Qing, 2022). These insights suggest that moderation education is not only about "what" is taught, but also about "how" teachers design learning experiences that keep children engaged.

The urgency of character education in early childhood is widely recognised because it lays the foundation for children's emotional, social, and moral development. Several studies emphasise that active collaboration between parents and educators is key to optimising character education at this stage (Rosnelli, 2023; Sujana et al., 2023; Widat & Wulandari, 2023). Parents can support character education through educational conversations, moral discussions, and habituation of positive behaviour at home (Sujana et al., 2023), helping children navigate social challenges and maintain behavioural consistency (Rosnelli, 2023; Winterbottom & Schmidt, 2022). In the classroom, educators can use daily interactions to build values through prosocial activities, reflection, and experiential learning (Ko, 2017).

Among child-friendly strategies, storytelling and experiential learning stand out because they present moral ideas in forms children can grasp. Research on culturally relevant bilingual storytelling shows its potential to strengthen moral messages (Prasetya & Hirashima, 2018; Wiraatmaja et al., 2021). Other studies confirm that storytelling not only stimulates imagination but also helps children understand social and ethical meanings more deeply (Bastian et al., 2019; Kristini, 2024). In addition, project-based activities that encourage cooperation and problem-solving through play can combine cognitive development with character outcomes (Ambarwati & Wangid, 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2023). These approaches tend to work best when they are grounded in children's real social situations.

Community involvement and cultural contextualisation further strengthen the relevance of character education. Johansson et al. (2014) and Kurniaman et al. (2022) show that integrating local wisdom and cultural values can increase programme relevance, support character development, and strengthen social cohesion. A curriculum that balances academic knowledge, character education, and emotional intelligence is also described as an important foundation for forming a more moderate generation (Noegroho, 2024; Rosnelli, 2023). Within this broader discussion, storytelling is widely recognised as a practical medium for moral and religious education.

Empirical studies support storytelling as a pedagogical strategy rather than mere entertainment. Nurhayati et al. (2019) found that storytelling grounded in local wisdom is effective in conveying moral messages and fostering empathy. Al-Hawamleh (2019) argues that narratives based on religious texts, when delivered in a structured way, can develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains simultaneously. Rasmini & Karta (2021) also highlight storytelling's multifunctional role in strengthening moral and religious understanding, and similar benefits have been reported in other religious traditions (Age & Dhey, 2024). Importantly, Maolana (2024) warns that superficial religious understanding may increase vulnerability to radical interpretations, which makes early, story-based moderation learning relevant as a preventive effort.

Because the study develops a model, validation and quality assurance become essential. Barnett (2011) links participation in quality early childhood education with better cognitive and social development, while Khanam et al. (2023) highlight socio-economic and cultural factors that influence parents' schooling decisions. Hamre (2014) underlines the importance of teacher-child interaction quality, and Mickelson et al. (2021) note that professional training can improve that interaction. Iwasaki (2022) emphasises the need for contextual learning, while Ahmad et al. (2021) stress the importance of psychometrically valid assessment instruments to measure learning effectiveness. Widuoyekti et al. (2022) show that educational games can support early childhood literacy, and Snider (2023) calls for continuous curriculum innovation to keep educational models relevant over time.

Finally, the integration of religious and cultural values into the PAUD curriculum is central to creating an inclusive learning environment. Abdullah & Abdullah (2018) emphasise teacher training for multicultural competence, and Rudnytska-Yuriichuk et al. (2022) show that multicultural value-based curricula can foster tolerance. Olsson (2023) and Yörüko et al. (2024) highlight the critical role of educators who understand cultural diversity,

while Song & Zhang (2024) argue for integrating authentic history and culture in the curriculum. Aghili et al. (2021) emphasise that curricula should respect diverse religious teachings while fostering justice, and Kelemen (2017) stresses parental involvement in supporting multicultural education in early childhood.

From the discussion above, a gap remains in the availability of a structured, storytelling-based, and multidisciplinary religious moderation learning model that has been validated for Islamic PAUD contexts. This study addresses the gap by combining a contextual approach with storytelling grounded in authentic Islamic sources, supported by expert validation in early childhood education, religious moderation, and learning design. Accordingly, this research aims to develop and validate a religious moderation learning model for early childhood education that is relevant, feasible, and potentially scalable for Islamic PAUD institutions in Indonesia.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed Educational Design Research (EDR) based on Plomp (2013). The framework was selected because it supports model development that starts from field needs, is improved through iterative prototyping, and is strengthened through an assessment stage before wider implementation. The research followed three phases: preliminary research, prototyping, and assessment.

2.2 Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted in Kutai Timur Regency, East Kalimantan, at RA Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an. Field participants included the school head, teachers, and children, selected through purposive sampling to capture information-rich data about classroom routines and the practical challenges of teaching moderation-related values in an Islamic early childhood setting.

2.3 Development Process

2.3.1 Preliminary research

The study began with a needs and context analysis to identify how religious and character learning was currently practiced and what support teachers needed. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with the school head and teachers, and a review of learning documents such as lesson plans (RPPH), teaching materials, and learning media. Findings from this phase were used to formulate design requirements and to outline the initial structure of the learning model.

2.3.2 Prototyping phase

Based on the preliminary findings, a prototype model was developed using a contextual approach and Islamic storytelling as the central learning strategy. The prototype included learning objectives, content focus, the learning syntax, examples of classroom activities and media, and an observation-based assessment guide. During this phase, the prototype was refined through formative consideration of clarity, feasibility, and alignment between values, stories, and classroom activities.

2.3.3 Assessment phase (Expert Validation)

In the assessment phase, the prototype was evaluated through expert validation to determine its feasibility and readiness for classroom trials. Validation involved three experts representing early childhood education, religious moderation, and learning design. The experts assessed the prototype using a 1–5 Likert-scale validation sheet covering four aspects: content feasibility, language, presentation, and graphics. Their quantitative ratings and qualitative feedback served as the main basis for revising the prototype.

2.3.4 Model Revision

Based on the expert feedback, the prototype was revised in targeted ways. Revisions focused on: (a) clarifying how moderation values are embedded in each story and learning activity, (b) refining the wording and sequencing of the five learning steps to make classroom implementation more straightforward, and (c) strengthening the assessment component by aligning observation indicators with the intended moderation behaviours and providing clearer prompts for teacher reflection. These revisions were intended to make the model more coherent, practical, and teacher-friendly.

2.3.5 Final Products

The final output of this study is a revised prototype of a Religious Moderation Learning Model for Islamic PAUD/RA. The product package includes the model rationale and learning syntax, examples of lesson planning (e.g., RPPH/RPPM), sample Islamic stories aligned with moderation values, suggested learning media and classroom activities, and an observation-based assessment guide. Since the current study emphasised expert validation, the product is presented as a validated prototype intended for subsequent classroom trials and further refinement.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data were obtained through observations, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and expert validation questionnaires. Observations captured classroom routines and how religious and character learning was implemented. Interviews explored teachers' experiences, needs, and constraints. Documentation included lesson plans (RPPH), teaching materials, learning media, and activity notes. Expert questionnaires were used to evaluate feasibility and collect detailed suggestions for improvement.

2.5 Research Instruments

The study used interview guides, observation sheets, a documentation checklist, and an expert validation sheet with a 1–5 Likert scale. The validation indicators addressed four aspects: content feasibility, language, presentation, and graphics.

2.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data from expert validation were analysed descriptively by calculating mean scores to describe the prototype's feasibility level. Qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documents were analysed using data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2020). Triangulation across sources and methods was applied to strengthen credibility.

2.7 Research Ethics

Institutional permission was obtained before data collection. Adult participants were informed about the study and participated voluntarily. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymising identities in reporting, and all data were used solely for research purposes.

3. Result

3.1. Description of Preliminary Study Results (Model Development Needs)

The preliminary study was carried out through observation of the learning process at the RA Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an, the study of RPPH documents, and in-depth interviews with the head of the RA and the class teacher. The results of observations show that religious learning has become a routine part of children's activities. However, its application tends to focus on memorizing prayers, reciting the Qur'an, and the stories of the Prophet that are conveyed in general. The values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, collaboration, anti-violence, and respect for differences, have not been explicitly conveyed or measured in their development.

A review of the RPPH document revealed that indicators of development achievements related to religious moderation were not specifically found. The existing indicators emphasize simpler cognitive and psychomotor skills, such as "the child can say prayers correctly" or "the child can imitate the teacher's readings," without being accompanied by social attitude indicators that lead to moderation values.

The results of interviews with classroom teachers reinforce these findings. The classroom teacher stated that stories have been used extensively in learning, but have never been designed for systematically instilling the value of moderation:

"The stories I bring are usually around the story of prophets or role models, but I have never specifically designed them to teach tolerance or respect for different friends. Teachers do need clear guidance to be able to lead there."

The teacher also added that some children already have experience interacting with friends from different backgrounds, but the discussion of these differences has not been used as a learning opportunity.

The head of RA, Siti Aminatun, also noted that although the PAUD curriculum generally contains character education, there are no specific guidelines for integrating religious moderation. She emphasised that teachers need concrete, practical, and ready-to-use guidance:

"The curriculum does contain character education, but for religious moderation, there is no clear reference. Teachers need examples of activities that can be directly applied in the classroom, not just theory."

From the findings of this preliminary study, it can be concluded that there are three primary needs: 1) Structured and easy-to-implement learning guidelines for teachers to integrate religious moderation, 2) Learning methods that are fun and developmentally appropriate to children, and 3) Materials that are relevant to children's real lives and socio-cultural contexts in the RA environment.

3.2. Early Model Design Products (Prototyping Phase Output)

Based on the needs identified in the preliminary study, a Religious Moderation Learning Model for early childhood was drafted using a contextual approach and storytelling. This choice is supported by literature that highlights stories as an effective medium for conveying moral values to children, and it also reflects teachers' existing practice of storytelling although it has not yet been directed specifically toward moderation values. The model is organised into five main stages:

3.2.1. Problem Orientation (topics/objects close to children's lives)

The teacher introduces a simple problem through a topic or object familiar to children and links it to the story that will be presented. For example, before telling a story about the Prophet Muhammad SAW helping a neighbour, the teacher asks children about moments when they helped a friend or family member.

3.2.2. Story Presentation

The teacher delivers selected Islamic stories from authentic sources, drawing on the Qur'an, Hadith, and/or scholars' exemplars that relate to moderation values.

3.2.3. Message Discussion

The teacher guides children to identify the story's key messages by linking them to four moderation aspects: tolerance, collaboration, anti-violence, and respect for differences.

3.2.4. Contextualisation to Everyday Problems

Children connect the story's message to real situations in their daily lives. This stage can be supported through simple role-play, drawing story scenes, or cooperative games that encourage empathy and friendly problem-solving, so children can practise what the story means in concrete terms.

3.2.5. Reflection and Conclusion

Children are invited to re-tell the story's message and relate it to their daily lives, for example, with simple questions such as: "What would you do if your friends played differently?" or "How would we stay friends even though we are different?"

The sources of stories used in this model are categorized into three main groups, namely (1) Islamic stories from the Qur'an (e.g. the story of the Prophet Yusuf about forgiving his brother, the story of the Prophet Moses helping the weak), (2) The story of the Hadith and the history of the Prophet and his companions (e.g. the Hadith about loving fellow Muslims, the story of Umar bin Khattab who is fair to all his people), and (3) The stories of exemplary scholars (e.g. Imam Shafi'i who respected differences of opinion, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal who patiently faced trials).

The teacher considers the design of this model very helpful:

"If there is a step-by-step guide and stories that are in accordance with Islamic teachings and close to the daily life of children, it will be easier to convey them. Teachers also make it easier to relate it to their experiences."

In addition to the learning steps, this model is equipped with a moderating behavior observation instrument that monitors children's development in terms of cooperation, respect for differences, the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully, and empathy for others. The following are indicators of the moderation behavior observation instrument:

Table 1. Moderation Behavior Indicators

No	Aspects	Indicator
1	Tolerance	a. Accepting friends with different habits or backgrounds b. Not imposing will when playing c. Patiently waiting for your turn
2	Collaboration	a. Want to share toys or learning tools b. Actively help a friend who is struggling c. Participate in group activities
3	Anti-violence	a. Avoiding physical arguments b. Use polite words when disagreeing c. Solving problems by discussing
4	Respect for Differences	a. Respect for friends who have different ways of worship b. Respect your friends' opinions even if they differ c. Show respect to all teachers and friends

3.3. Expert Validation Results (Assessment phase)

Experts representing three areas of expertise: early childhood education, religious moderation, and learning design, were involved in the assessment. Four aspects were assessed: content feasibility, language, presentation, and graphics.

Table 2. Expert Validation Result Score

No	Aspects	Average Score	Brief Description
1	Content Feasibility	4,58	The value of moderation already exists; it is necessary to enrich cross-difference examples.
2	Language	4,50	Simple language, needs more in-depth reflective questions
3	Presentation	4,53	Precise flow, need for a variety of learning media
4	Graphics	4,53	Interesting illustrations, need more diverse characters
	Mean	4,54	

Table 3. Qualitative input from experts

No	Expertise	Qualitative Input
1	Early Childhood Education	The learning stage is appropriate, but the reflection section needs examples of questions that provoke children to think deeper, for example, about how to behave if friends have different habits.
2	Religious Moderation	The value of moderation is already present, but incorporating more concrete examples of cross-difference cooperation tailored to the context of early childhood would be beneficial.
3	Learning Design	Model book illustrations are already attractive, but incorporating more diverse color variations and characters can better suit the child's interests and backgrounds.

3.4. Model Revision

The model revision was carried out based on expert input, with a focus on adjusting story sources, strengthening reflection content, enhancing media quality, and refining observation instruments. The main changes are illustrated in the following table:

Table 4. Comparison of Initial and Revised Models

No	Components Model	Early Version	Revised Version
1	Story Material	Religious stories	Islamic stories from the Qur'an, Hadiths, and examples of scholars
2	Reflection Guide	None	List of reflective questions based on the value of religious moderation
3	Media & Illustrations	Standard illustration, limited color	Inclusive illustrations, bright colors, diverse characters
4	Observation Instruments	Simple	Structured observation sheet of religious moderation behavior

Head of RA assessed that this revision answered the needs of teachers: "If the model is clear and there are observation instruments, teachers can immediately know how children are developing from time to time." With this revision, the learning model becomes more practical, measurable, and contextual, so it is hoped that it can be implemented effectively in RA and other PAUDs.

3.5. Final Products

The final output of this research is a revised Religious Moderation Learning Model for Islamic PAUD/RA, developed through Plomp's (2013) stages of preliminary research, prototyping, and assessment, and strengthened through expert validation and revision. In the assessment phase, the model was rated highly feasible across content feasibility, language, presentation, and graphics (4.50–4.58; $M = 4.54$). Expert feedback mainly called for richer examples of cooperation across differences, deeper reflective prompts, greater variety in learning media, and more diverse characters in the visuals. In response, the revised model specifies story sources (the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholars' exemplars), provides a structured reflection guide, improves media and illustration quality, and refines the observation instrument. The model is presented as a validated prototype for teachers and is organised into five learning steps: (1) problem orientation using topics or objects close to children's daily lives and linked to the story; (2) story presentation using Islamic stories from the Qur'an, Hadith, and/or scholars' exemplars; (3) message discussion to explore moderation-related meanings in the story; (4) contextualisation by connecting the story's message to everyday classroom or home situations; and (5) reflection and conclusion to help children restate the message and agree on simple take-away behaviours. The package includes teacher guidance, reflective prompts, examples of contextualisation activities, and an observation instrument covering four moderation aspects: tolerance, collaboration, anti-violence, and respect for differences, supported by a clearer and more inclusive visual layout. While the prototype is ready for guided use, broader classroom trials are recommended to examine effectiveness and further refine implementation.

4. Discussion

The preliminary study points to a practical gap in how religious moderation is brought into daily learning in the RA Islamic Boarding School of Al-Qur'an Science'an. Religious routines, memorising prayers, Qur'an reading, and Prophet stories are already part of classroom life, yet moderation values such as tolerance, collaboration, anti-violence, and respect for differences are rarely made explicit as learning targets or tracked in children's development. This concern has also been raised in the literature: when religious education mainly transmits doctrine, it may overlook the social–moral competencies needed in diverse communities (Agbaria, 2024; Hannam, 2024; Saada, 2020; Saiful, 2023; Subqi et al., 2022; Zellma, 2024). The RPPH review in this study shows a similar pattern, where indicators lean toward cognitive or mechanical achievements rather than affective and civic dispositions (Garrett, 2024; Garrett, 2025; Hasbullah & Sanusi, 2023). Teachers' accounts add an important nuance: storytelling is familiar and frequently used, but it has not been organised as a deliberate pathway for teaching moderation, suggesting that teachers need tools that connect moral aims with concrete, developmentally appropriate activities (Sujana et al., 2023; Rosnelli, 2023). In practice, everyday peer interactions, especially when children meet differences, often pass as routine moments rather than being shaped into guided learning opportunities, echoing what prior studies describe as a "missed moment" in moral learning design (Nurhayati et al., 2019; Rasmini & Karta, 2021).

What the model offers, then, is not simply another set of values to promote, but a way to teach those values in a form that fits early childhood classrooms. Its novelty lies in turning moderate education into a workable sequence through Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) and storytelling. Both approaches have been shown to support moral learning when stories are connected to children's lived situations rather than presented as abstract advice (Al-Hawamleh, 2019; Haste, 2025; Prasetya & Hirashima, 2018; Zhao et al., 2023). CTL emphasises linking new ideas to real experience (Mayer, 2024), and for young children, that link is decisive: moral meanings make more sense when they are anchored in familiar classroom and home scenarios (Hamre, 2014; Iwasaki, 2022). The learning flow also matches constructivist principles, children build meaning through guided interaction and practice, not through one-

way instruction (Ambarwati & Wangid, 2024; Widuroyeki et al., 2022). Another distinctive element is the use of story sources from the Qur'an, Hadith, and exemplary scholars. This strengthens religious legitimacy while allowing the model to carry inclusive civic meanings, in line with arguments that early moral education in Muslim contexts should balance religious orthodoxy with inclusive social ethics (Agbaria, 2024; Essabane et al., 2022; Pallathadka et al., 2023; Saada, 2023).

A second contribution is the model's emphasis on enactment and assessment. Role-play and creative activities make "learning by doing" more than a slogan; they give children a safe space to practise cooperation, respectful disagreement, and peaceful problem-solving (Ko, 2017; Marafat et al., 2020). This also shifts the teacher's role toward facilitation and guided discovery, which aligns with broader recommendations in values education (Hong & Hong, 2022; la Velle, 2023). The feasibility results from expert validation (mean 4.54) suggest that the model is solid in content, language, presentation, and graphics, while the qualitative feedback points to improvements that are very practical: strengthen reflective questions, enrich cross-difference cooperation examples, diversify media, and make visuals more inclusive. These directions are consistent with evidence that inclusive representations can nurture empathy and reduce stereotyping (Abdullah & Abdullah, 2018; Diwanji et al., 2023; Freedman-Cass et al., 2023; Kagan et al., 2024; Olsson, 2023; Peters Rit et al., 2024; Rudnytska-Yuriiichuk et al., 2022). They also fit research showing that dialogic prompts can deepen children's moral understanding and perspective taking (Ahmad et al., 2021), and that multisensory story engagement supports accessibility across learning and language differences (Kucirkova & Rodriguez-Leon, 2023; Seidl et al., 2024). In response, the revision focused on four concrete upgrades: clarifying Islamic story sources, adding structured reflective prompts, redesigning visuals to be more inclusive, and strengthening the observation tool into a clearer rubric (Wiratmaja et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2021; Silva et al., 2020; Weston et al., 2021).

In practical terms, the revised model is intended to fit teacher planning and classroom routines, including the way RPPH is commonly organised under the Independent Curriculum. Authentic story sources can support acceptance among religious stakeholders, while role-play helps keep learning holistic, covering language, cognition, and socio-emotional growth (Hasbullah & Sanusi, 2023; Delfin & Wang, 2023; Foulds, 2023; Ko, 2017; Marafat et al., 2020). The package includes teacher guidance, reflective prompts, activity ideas, and a four-aspect observation instrument that gives teachers a clearer route from lesson delivery to observation and follow-up.

This study is limited because development ended at expert validation and revision, without classroom trials. As a result, the evidence currently supports feasibility and design quality rather than demonstrated effects on children's behaviour. Future work should test implementation in diverse PAUD settings and continue strengthening the observation instrument through more rigorous psychometric examination. At the practice level, teacher development can focus on facilitation skills, reflective questioning, and inclusive learning media; at the policy level, moderation guidance and resource support can help schools implement the approach more consistently.

5. Conclusion

This study developed an expert-validated prototype of a Religious Moderation Learning Model for Islamic PAUD/RA using Plomp's (2013) educational design research stages. The model brings together contextual learning and Islamic storytelling drawn from the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholars' exemplars. It offers a clear five-step classroom flow, supported by reflective prompts and an observation tool covering four moderation aspects: tolerance, collaboration, anti-violence, and respect for differences. Expert validation showed high feasibility (overall mean 4.54) and led to focused refinements, especially stronger reflection prompts, richer examples of cooperation across differences, and more inclusive visuals. Practically, teachers can integrate the model into lesson planning (RPPH/RPPM) to support character learning in Islamic PAUD/RA. Because classroom trials were not conducted, the evidence is limited to feasibility; future studies should test the model in different settings and continue strengthening the observation instrument.

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