

EXPLORING THE HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION AS A PILLAR OF PEACE EDUCATION IN MINAHASA

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the historical development of religious moderation within the cultural context of Minahasa and to analyze its relevance as a foundation for peace education in the contemporary era. Although studies on religious moderation in Indonesia has significantly increased, most studies remain macro-oriented and lack in-depth integration between local cultural values and contextual educational strategies. This gap highlights the need for a more grounded and culturally embedded analysis. This research employs a qualitative approach through a systematic literature review, supported by thematic analysis and historical interpretation, to examine the evolution and transformation of moderation values in Minahasa society. The findings reveal that religious moderation in Minahasa is not a fixed cultural trait, but a socially constructed and continuously negotiated process shaped by local wisdom such as Mapalus (mutual cooperation), customary deliberation, and the Toar Lumimuut narrative, which embodies equality and social solidarity. However, these values are increasingly challenged by digital radicalization, misinformation, and the weakening of intergenerational transmission. This research argues that integrating religious moderation into peace education requires adaptive, critical, and context-sensitive strategies, particularly through digital engagement and culturally grounded curricula. The research contributes to the existing literature by offering a contextualized conceptual framework that positions local wisdom as a dynamic resource for strengthening peace education and sustaining social harmony in a rapidly changing society.

Keywords: *Character Education, Minahasa, Peace Education, Religious Moderation, Social Harmony*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country built on the foundation of diversity, both in terms of religion, ethnicity, language, and tradition. This diversity is wealth, but at the same time it is vulnerable to becoming a source of friction if not managed properly. Religious moderation is present as a strategic approach to maintain a balance between personal beliefs and respect for the beliefs of others, in order to prevent conflict and promote social peace (Aryansyah & Fadhli 2024). This concept was not born out of a vacuum but the history of the archipelago shows that the principles of moderation have been practiced since the era of great kingdoms such as Majapahit and Sriwijaya, where tolerance for differences became a pillar of the unity of a vast region (Wagiu et al., 2023). Minahasa is one of the examples of local wisdom that has long internalized the value of moderation in its social life (Rogahang et al., 2023). The legend of *Toar Lumimuut* is not just an origin story, but a cultural narrative that affirms gender equality, respect, and cooperation as the foundation of a shared life (Pelealu et al., 2024). This value is manifested in the practice of *Mapalus* (mutual cooperation) and customary deliberation, where every vote, regardless of status or religious identity, has equal weight in decision-making. This lifestyle forms a social ecosystem that is open to differences, solid in collaboration, and balanced in managing conflicts. However, historical dynamics show that social harmony in Minahasa does not always run smoothly. The Dutch colonial period introduced a new patriarchal system and power structure that shifted the egalitarian pattern of local society (Manua et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the people of Minahasa have managed to maintain the core values of moderation through creative adaptation, combining new elements with old traditions without sacrificing the principles of openness and equality. Challenges in the modern era actually come from more complex factors and have a direct impact on the

sustainability of the value of religious moderation.

First, radicalization and extremism are increasingly easy to infiltrate through digital channels. Social media, online forums, and video-sharing platforms have become fertile spaces for the spread of intolerance narratives wrapped in religious language (Mahsusi et al., 2023). Such content, although often inaccurate or decontextualized, is able to influence the perception of the younger generation because it appears in a creative format, emotional language, and is packaged by figures they consider credible. In Minahasa, where religious diversity has become part of social identity, this trend of radicalization has the potential to erode the pattern of inclusive interaction that has been maintained. *Second*, information distortion poses a significant challenge, as hoaxes, misinformation, and hate speech often instrumentalize religious issues to intensify social tensions and intergroup conflict. This pattern was seen when hoax information surrounding religious events in other regions quickly spreads within Minahasa, triggering negative comments and polarization in the local digital space (Pelealu et al., 2024). In many cases, such content is produced to divide society, undermine mutual trust, and obscure historical facts and social realities that are actually harmonious. *Third*, the erosion of local values occurs along with urbanization and the penetration of global culture, especially pop culture that prioritizes individualism (Suharyanto, 2024). Young people spend more time in the digital space than directly engage in interfaith interactions in their communities. As a result, the habits of mutual cooperation, traditional deliberations, and social gatherings that used to be natural spaces to foster a sense of togetherness are becoming rare. The values of togetherness that are the strength of Minahasa are increasingly marginalized in daily life (Tumujuet al., 2023). *Fourth*, the generation gap exacerbates the situation. The young generation of Minahasa who grew up in the digital age often does not have adequate

access to a complete narrative of local history and culture. Folk tales such as *Toar Lumimuut* or the practice of Mapalus are more stored in the memories of the older generation, while the transfer of knowledge across generations is hampered by differences in lifestyles and communication patterns. As a result, the emotional connection to the legacy of religious moderation is weakened, leaving the younger generation vulnerable to new ideologies that are at odds with the values of local wisdom.

This condition highlights that the sustainability of religious moderation in Minahasa can no longer depend solely on informal cultural transmission as in the past. Education is a strategic channel to revitalize and internalize these values, both through formal curriculum, character education, and digital technology-based learning media (Ahsan et al., 2025). Unfortunately, academic studies have tended to discuss religious moderation at the national level, without elaborating in detail on its relationship with the local cultural base of Minahasa (Wagiu et al., 2023). In fact, the integration of local contexts into formal education has the potential to be more effective in building the character of an inclusive and tolerant generation. The urgency of peace education is very relevant. Peace education is not only oriented towards cognitive knowledge, but also on the formation of attitudes, values, and skills that foster tolerance, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and respect for differences. Through peace education, the younger generation is not only taught to understand local history and culture, but also trained to internalize these values in the practice of daily life. Thus, religious moderation, which has long been the social identity of the Minahasa people, can be systematically re-actualized in the educational space. This shows that peace education and religious moderation have a symbiotic relationship: moderation is the foundation of values, while peace education is an instrument of implementation that ensures the sustainability of social harmony in the midst of the challenges of globalization.

This research aims to explore the history of religious moderation in Minahasa, identify the core values contained in it, and analyze how these values can be actualized into the pillars of peace education today. This study not only traces cultural roots such as the *Toar Lumimuut* legend, traditional deliberations, and Mapalus, but also maps contemporary challenges and opportunities for transformation through education. With this framework, the results and discussion will show a direct correlation between the legacy of religious moderation values and contextual learning strategies that are able to answer the challenges of globalization, radicalization, and value degradation in the digital era.

Literature Review

Religious moderation has emerged as a significant discourse in contemporary Indonesian scholarship, particularly amid growing concerns over religious polarization, radicalism, and the fragmentation of social relations in the digital era. Most existing studies position moderation as an important strategy for maintaining national unity and social harmony within Indonesia's multicultural society. In this context, moderation is commonly understood as an attitude that balances personal religious commitment with openness and respect toward others. Aryansyah and Fadhli (2024) argue that religious moderation enables peaceful coexistence in plural societies by encouraging tolerance and mutual recognition among different religious communities. Similarly, the framework promoted by the Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia (RI, 2021) emphasizes moderation as a national policy instrument for countering extremism and strengthening social cohesion. Although these studies provide important conceptual and normative foundations, they generally remain macro-oriented and pay limited attention to the ways moderation is negotiated historically and culturally within local communities, including Minahasa.

A number of recent studies have attempted to connect religious moderation with local wisdom traditions. Wagiu et al.,

(2023) found that the Minahasan value of *Mapalus* reflects principles of solidarity, cooperation, and openness that support practices of moderation in communal life. Similar findings were reported by Pelealu et al., (2024), who explain that Minahasan culture promotes tolerance through collective ethics and patterns of communal interaction. In addition, Rogahang et al. (2023) associate the philosophy of *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* with the strengthening of moderation values in society. These studies successfully highlight the contribution of local wisdom to social harmony and intercommunal relations. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature tends to portray Minahasa as naturally tolerant without critically examining moderation as a dynamic social construction shaped by historical negotiation and contestation. Consequently, there remains limited discussion regarding how local moderation values have adapted to colonialism, modernization, globalization, contemporary digital transformation.

Other studies focusing on Minahasan cultural narratives have also contributed to broader discussions on inclusivity and equality. Research by Rottie, Palar, and Kojong (2025), as well as Rantung (2024), interprets the narrative of *Toar Lumimuut* as a cultural representation of gender equality and social balance within Minahasan society. Meanwhile, research by Manua et al. (2025) emphasize the historical role of Minahasan women in preserving social and religious values amid social transformation. These studies demonstrate that mythology and local social structures function as important cultural resources for inclusivity. However, their analyses are largely concentrated on gender discourse and symbolic cultural representation, rather than systematically connecting these narratives to the broader framework of peace education and religious moderation in present-day contexts.

Within field of education, several scholars have examined the integration of moderation values into learning systems and pedagogical practices. Mahsusi et al. (2023) identify educational activities as strategic

spaces for transmitting moderation values through collaborative and dialogical learning approaches. Likewise, Adhan (2021) underlines the central role of educators in shaping moderation-oriented religious education while also recognizing the institutional and pedagogical challenges that teachers encounter. Furthermore, Ahsan et al. (2025) argue that digital educational applications can contribute positively to the development of moral and social character among younger generations. Collectively, these studies indicate that education possesses significant potential as a medium for promoting tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and social harmony. However, most educational discussions on moderation remain heavily centered on Islamic educational contexts, such as pesantren systems, Islamic preaching, and Muslim digital moderation campaigns. As a result, literature discussing peace education grounded in Christian-Minahasan cultural contexts remains highly limited, especially within studies focusing on moderation and religious education. Another growing area of scholarship concerns the relationship between technology, digitalization, and religious moderation. Pamungkas, Suleman, and Santoso (2024) explain that digital ethnography reveals how social media communities serve a spaces for campaigning and promoting tolerance and nonviolence through online engagement. At the same time, Suharyanto (2024) warns that globalization and digital culture contribute to the erosion of local communal values and traditional social interaction. This issue is particularly relevant in Minahasa, where younger generations increasingly interact within digital spaces rather than through traditional communal mechanisms such as *Mapalus* and customary deliberation. Despite these important insights, previous studies rarely examine how digital challenges intersect with the weakening transmission of local moderation values, nor how peace education can adaptively respond to these transformations.

Based on the literature review above, several significant research gaps can be

identified. First, previous studies have generally discussed religious moderation either from a normative national perspective or descriptively through the lens of local wisdom, without integrating historical analysis, socio-cultural transformation, and peace education into a comprehensive analytical framework. Second, research on religious moderation in Minahasan often romanticizes local harmony while paying insufficient attention to the dynamic negotiations, vulnerabilities, and contestations surrounding moderation values across different historical periods. Third, studies on religious moderation in educational contexts continue to be dominated by Islamic educational perspectives, leaving Christian-based and Minahasan cultural perspectives underexplored. Fourth, limited scholarship has addressed the impact of digital radicalization, misinformation, and generational disconnection from local culture in relation to moderation-based peace education. Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by offering a contextual and historically grounded analysis of religious moderation in Minahasa as a foundation for peace education. This research conceptualize religious moderation not as a static cultural inheritance, but as a dynamic and adaptive social process continuously negotiated within changing historical, social, and digital contexts. By integrating historical interpretation, local cultural analysis, and peace education perspectives, this research proposes a conceptual framework explaining how local wisdom traditions such as *Toar Lumimuut*, *Mapalus*, and customary deliberation may be transformed into adaptive educational strategies capable of responding to contemporary societal challenges. The novelty of this research lies in its effort to connect discussions of local wisdom, religious moderation, digital transformation, and peace education within a Christian-Minahasan context—an area that remains underexplored in contemporary scholarship on religious moderation and religious education.

Conceptual Framework

Minahasa Cultural Values

In Minahasa's social history, the values of togetherness are not just a decoration of tradition, but become the breath of community life (Pelealu et al. 2024). The story of *Toar Lumimuut*, for example, not only tells the origin of the ancestors, but also confirms the view that men and women stand on an equal footing in building a community. This spirit is then manifested in the practice of *Mapalus*, which is mutual cooperation that binds people to support each other, whether in work in the fields, building houses, or helping bereaved families (Kim 2025). Customary deliberation mechanisms complete everything. Here, the problem is resolved through an open dialogue room, every vote is respected, and the decision is born from a common consensus. The combination of these three elements forms a social ecosystem that is strong and open to differences, solid in cooperation, and maintained in balance.

The Principle of Religious Moderation

Religious moderation in Minahasa is not just jargon memorized in seminars, but has long lived in daily interactions (Nendissa et al. 2026). Tolerance is felt when people with different beliefs can sit at the same table, eat together, or work together to build public facilities without questioning their religious identity. Equality and inclusivity are also evident in the way society provides equal space for everyone, both men and women, young and old, to participate in decision-making. In addition, there is social solidarity that crosses religious barriers such as helping disaster victims, arranging funerals, or raising funds for the sick. These principles are not just theories, but habits that are inherited from generation to generation, so that moderation becomes part of social identity, not a cultural attachment (Mahsusi et al., 2023).

Integration in Education

To prevent these values and principles from being diminished by globalization, education serves as an important medium for passing these values and principles to the younger generation. Schools in Minahasa began to integrate local stories as part of education, such as *Toar Lumimuut* or the *Mapamus* tradition, as learning materials that foster a sense of pride in the region's heritage while instilling the value of tolerance (Rantung, 2024). Religious moderation character education is also present through activities involving interfaith interactions, joint social projects, and discussions on how to resolve differences peacefully. Religious moderation is further cultivated through educational programs that encourage interfaith interaction, collaborative social projects, and discussions on peaceful conflict resolution. In addition, digital media have expanded the reach of these values through short videos, podcasts, and online campaigns that promote positive narratives of coexistence and social harmony. Teachers also receive professional training, to ensure that learning approaches remain relevant to students' social realities. By this way, religious moderation is not only included in the curriculum, but really becomes a life attitude that students take out of school.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative research design with a historical and socio-cultural approach to explore the development of religious moderation in Minahasa and its relevance as a pillar of peace education (Rizki & Pasaribu, 2026). The qualitative approach is used to interpret meanings, values, and social practices embedded in cultural traditions and historical processes (Kelly, 2023). The data for this research consist of secondary sources obtained from credible written materials, including academic journal articles, books, historical documents, and policy reports related to religious moderation, Minahasa culture, and peace education. The selection of sources was conducted through

purposive sampling based on the relevance to the research topic, academic credibility, and contextual suitability. Data collection was carried out through a systematic literature review process, which includes identifying relevant publications through academic databases, screening sources based on inclusion criteria such as relevance, recency, and scholarly validity, and organizing the selected data into thematic categories. The collected data were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In this process, relevant information was selected, reduced, categorized into conceptual themes such as cultural values, moderation principles, and educational strategies, and interpreted to identify patterns and relationships. The analysis was further strengthened by a historical interpretation approach to trace the continuity and transformation of moderation values in different periods. The research was conducted in several stages, including the formulation of research problems, development of a conceptual framework, systematic data collection, data coding and categorization, thematic and historical analysis, and synthesis of findings into a coherent narrative. To ensure the credibility of the findings, this study employs source triangulation by comparing multiple references from different disciplines, as well as theoretical triangulation to interpret findings through relevant conceptual frameworks. Reliability is maintained through consistent data coding and transparent documentation of sources, ensuring that the research process is systematic, traceable, and academically accountable.

DISCUSSION

Religious Moderation in Minahasa: The Legacy of Local Wisdom and Social Harmony

Religious moderation in Minahasa is not a phenomenon that appears suddenly or simply as a result of interreligious encounters, but is the product of a long historical and

cultural process (Wagiu et al., 2023). However, this widely accepted narrative needs to be approached critically, as it tends to portray moderation as an inherent and stable cultural identity. In reality, moderation in Minahasa should be understood as a historically constructed and continuously negotiated social condition, shaped by changing socio-political contexts. Since the pre-colonial period, the people of Minahasa have built a social system based on the values of togetherness, openness, and respect for differences, yet these values have not always operated in a static or uncontested manner (Evers & Schrader, 2026). This inclusive character has been shaped by a combination of traditional belief systems, egalitarian social structures, and collective mechanisms for problem-solving. These three elements not only help prevent the dominance of particular groups but also contribute to minimizing the potential for internal conflict, but also minimize the potential for internal conflicts, although their effectiveness may vary across historical periods and social conditions. The traditional belief system of the Minahasa people, before the arrival of major religions, did not view differences as a threat. Rather, differences were understood as part of the cosmic order that must be maintained (Sarimbangun 2024). In this worldview, harmony between humans, nature, and the spiritual world is the main prerequisite for community welfare. This value of balance later influenced their reception of new religious teachings. When Christianity and Islam were introduced in the Minahasa region, acceptance was neither entirely passive nor fully conflict-free. Instead, the community processed these teachings within the framework of local culture through a process of cultural syncretism. While this integration helped maintain social continuity, it also reflects a process of negotiation between local traditions and external religious influences, rather than a purely harmonious transition.

The egalitarian social structure of Minahasa is also an important pillar for the sustainability of this moderation practice

(Winoto et al., 2023). Traditionally, Minahasan society has not been characterized by rigid social stratification based on caste or hereditary status that divides people into fixed social classes. Important decisions in communal life are taken through customary deliberation, a deliberative mechanism that ideally guarantees every voice both male and female, young and old are given equal right and consideration. However, this ideal condition also requires critical reflection, particularly when viewed in the context of historical transformations such as colonial intervention, which introduced new forms of hierarchy and authority. Customary deliberation is not merely a forum for discussion, but also serves as a means of reconciliation, restoring relationships, and strengthening solidarity (Sembiring & Gayatri, 2025). Through this mechanism, community fragmentation can be minimized, although its inclusivity may have been shaped and, at times, limited by broader socio-political structures. On the other hand, *Mapalus*, as a traditional practice of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), plays a key role in maintaining social cohesion. *Mapalus* is not only a mutual aid activity in work, but also contains a deep ethical dimension. Those who helps will be helped in return, not as a formal obligation, but as a moral commitment within existing social networks (Wagiu et al., 2023). From the perspective of social capital, *Mapalus* functions not only as a mechanism for reinforcement of internal solidarity but also medium to build cooperative relations across religious and ethnic groups. Nevertheless, in the context of modernization and social change, the sustainability of *Mapalus* as a living practice rather than merely a cultural symbol needs to be critically examined, especially as patterns of individualism and urbanization continue to grow (Heydemans et al., 2023).

The colonial period brought significant challenges to the social order in Minahasa. The Dutch colonial government introduced a more rigid patriarchal system, modern bureaucracy, and economic patterns that differed from local traditions. Theoretically,

these changes had the potential to weaken or even disrupt the egalitarian pattern that had previously developed. However, the Minahasa people demonstrated a high capacity for adaptation by selectively adopting beneficial elements such as formal education and agricultural technology, while maintaining certain local principles such as inclusivity and deliberation (Kaunang et al., 2025). This adaptive process shows that religious moderation in Minahasa is not a passive cultural inheritance, but an active and strategic response to shifts in power structures and social transformation. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, the model of religious moderation in Minahasa can be understood as the product of dynamic interaction between cultural values, social identity, and interfaith norms. Cultural values provide a moral framework that guides behaviour, social identities strengthen a sense of collective belonging, and interfaith norms regulate interaction across differences. However, this framework should not be regarded as inherently stable, as it remains vulnerable to external pressures such as globalization, digitalization, and ideological contestation (Jamil & Firmansyah, 2025).

The relationship between this condition and the purpose of the study becomes more evident in the face of contemporary challenges. Issues such as digital radicalization, information distortion, and erosion of local values are not merely external threats, but also indicators that the moderation ecosystem in Minahasa is not entirely immune or permanently established. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with a historical lens, this study presents a detailed picture of how moderation values have evolved over time. It also shows that values such as gender equality reflected in the *Toar Lumimuut* narrative, solidarity embodied in *Mapalus*, and democratic principles in customary deliberation are not only symbols of the past, but forms of social capital that require continuous reinterpretation and reinforcement (Kobis et al., 2024). Ultimately, religious moderation in Minahasa can be understood not merely as cultural

heritage, but as a dynamic and adaptive strategy that has enabled society to maintain relative social harmony across different historical contexts. However, its sustainability depends on continuous social reproduction, particularly through education and critical engagement with changing realities. In the absence of sustained efforts, these values risk becoming symbolic narratives rather than functional principles in contemporary society.

The Narrative of Toar Lumimuut and the Legacy of Equality: Building the Social Life of Minahasa

The story of *Toar Lumimuut* occupies a central position in Minahasan cultural cosmology (Rottie et al., 2025). This narrative is not merely a origin myth, but a social construction rich in values of gender equality, harmony, and togetherness. However, it is important to approach this narrative critically, as cultural texts often function not only as reflections of reality but also as normative ideals that societies aspire to achieve. In various versions of folklore, *Lumimuut* is portrayed as a strong mother figure, a life-giver, and a determinant of the direction of the community, while *Toar* is described as a protector and leader who stands parallel to her (Robot et al., 2025). This representation marks a significant distinction from many other myths in the archipelago that place women in subordinate positions. The equal relationship between *Toar* and *Lumimuut* is often interpreted as the ideological foundation of Minahasa social order and a symbol of collective identity that internalizes egalitarian principles (Rottie et al., 2025). Nevertheless, this interpretation requires further examination to assess the extent to which such symbolic equality is consistently realized in social practice. Since the pre-colonial era, the position of Minahasa women has been recognized in social and economic life. The kinship system adopted by the community provides a framework in which inheritance rights are distributed relatively equally between men and women. This principle is not only a customary norm but is also

supported by historical accounts of women's involvement in decision-making processes at both family and community levels (Manua et al., 2025). However, it would be reductive to assume that this egalitarianism operated uniformly across all historical periods. Historical transformations, particularly during the colonial era, introduced new patriarchal structures and institutional arrangements that may have reshaped gender relations. This suggests that the value of equality embedded in the *Toar Lumimuut* narrative should be understood not as a fixed social reality, but as a value that has been continuously negotiated, reinterpreted, and, at times, constrained by broader socio-political forces.

Customary deliberative institutions such as *bantik* and *walak* have functioned as formal arenas for the enactment of these egalitarian principles. Women are recognized as participants in deliberative processes, with the right to express their opinions and contribute to decision-making (Erni et al., 2024). This practice is often cited as evidence that Minahasan society has long embodied an inclusive participatory model. However, a critical perspective requires questioning whether such participation consistently interprets as equal influence and authority, especially within changing institutional contexts influenced by colonial governance and modern bureaucratic systems. In addition, women's roles in religious rites and community resource management—ranging from leading certain rituals to maintaining *Mapalus*-based social networks—highlight their strategic position within the social structure. Yet, these roles may also reflect gendered expectations that both empower and limit women's agency simultaneously.

The story of *Toar Lumimuut* can therefore be understood as a cultural text that plays a dual role, it transmits values of equality and moderation, while also serving as a normative framework that communities continually strive to realize. The gender equality promoted within this narrative can function as a mechanism for preventing domination by certain groups, thereby

aligning with key principles of religious moderation such as inclusivity, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence. At the same time, the gap between narrative ideals and lived realities opens space for critical reflection on how these values are practiced, adapted, or even contested in different historical contexts. The relevance of the *Toar Lumimuut* narrative has been maintained into the modern era through its integration into character education in Minahasa. Teachers utilize this story as a pedagogical tool to promote values of equality, collaboration, and tolerance through local history lessons, cultural arts, and interfaith activities. In addition, the narrative is often mobilized in contemporary discourse to support women's empowerment and social participation. This process reflects the reactivation of traditional values within a modern framework; however, it also raises questions about the extent to which these values are internalized by younger generations, particularly in the context of globalization and digital culture.

Within the framework of this research, which positions religious moderation as a pillar of peace education, the *Toar Lumimuut* narrative functions as a conceptual anchor linking cultural heritage with contemporary educational strategies. However, rather than treating it as unquestioned evidence of an inherently egalitarian society, it is more productive to view it as a dynamic cultural resource that requires continuous reinterpretation. The value of equality embedded within it, when critically and systematically integrated into curriculum and learning practices, has the potential to function as effective social capital in shaping an inclusive, reflective, and resilient generation capable of engaging constructively with diversity and resisting intolerant ideologies.

Religious Moderation as a Pillar of Peace Education

Education plays a strategic role as a primary medium for transmitting the values of religious moderation to younger generations. However, positioning education as a central

pillar requires critical examination, particularly regarding how far it is able to move beyond normative discourse into transformative practice. In Minahasa, this function is not limited to the transmission of cognitive knowledge, but also aims to shape social consciousness that respects diversity (Pelealu et al., 2024). Values such as openness, respect for differences, and social solidarity are embedded through learning processes designed to be contextual and responsive to contemporary social challenges. Nevertheless, the extent to which these values are internalized by students, rather than merely understood conceptually, remains an important question.

The implementation of religious moderation education in this region is carried out through the integration of local history, cultural practices, and traditional wisdom into the curriculum. This approach allows moderation to be framed not only as a theoretical construct but also as part of everyday social identity. Learning methods emphasize direct interaction and active participation, including interfaith discussions, conflict resolution simulations, and community-based collaborative projects. Programs such as the Intercultural Dialogue Program provide spaces for students from diverse backgrounds to engage with different perspectives and experiences (Mahsusi et al., 2023). However, while these initiatives reflect progressive pedagogical efforts, their sustainability and long-term impact on students' attitudes and behaviours require further critical evaluation, particularly in relation to broader social influences outside the classroom. In addition to formal classroom instruction, moderation education is reinforced through extracurricular activities that incorporate elements of art, culture, and local historical narratives. The use of Minahasa folklore, such as the *Toar Lumimuut* narrative, is considered an effective medium for instilling values of equality and togetherness, while connecting these values to contemporary social issues. In this way, tolerance is positioned not merely as an abstract concept, but as a lived practice.

However, in the context of increasing exposure to global digital culture, the effectiveness of these traditional narratives in shaping the worldview of younger generations must be reconsidered. There is a potential gap between the values promoted within educational settings and the competing narratives encountered by students in digital spaces.

Teacher capacity plays a central role in determining the success of religious moderation education (Adhan, 2021). Teachers who possess a deep understanding of students socio-cultural contexts are better equipped to deliver learning that is relevant and transformative. Various training programs have been implemented to strengthen teachers' competencies in promoting tolerance, facilitating intercultural dialogue, and managing conflict resolution processes. Despite these efforts, disparities in teacher readiness and pedagogical approaches may influence the consistency and effectiveness of moderation education across different educational settings. This suggests that teacher capacity should not be viewed as a uniform strength, but as a variable factor that significantly shapes educational outcomes.

This approach aligns with the research objective of positioning education as a strategic pillar for sustaining religious moderation amidst ongoing social change. However, rather than viewing education as a definitive solution, it is more appropriate to understand it as a contested and evolving space in values are continuously negotiated through curriculum design, teaching practices, and external socio-cultural influences. Through learning designs that integrate local wisdom, education has the potential to function as a social reinforcement mechanism, equipping younger generations with critical thinking skills, empathy, and the capacity to build harmony in a pluralistic society. At the same time, its effectiveness depends on continuous adaptation and critical reflection, particularly in responding to the challenges posed by globalization and digital transformation.

Integration of Religious Moderation Values in Peace Education in Minahasa

Although religious moderation has long been considered part of Minahasa's cultural identity, its sustainability faces significant challenges in the context of digitalization and globalization. One of the most pressing issues is the rapid flow of information through social media and other online platforms (Aryansyah & Fadhli 2024), which has facilitated the spread of extreme ideologies, misinformation, and religiously framed narratives of intolerance. These digital dynamics have the potential to reshape the mindsets of younger generations, often in ways that are disconnected from local cultural values. In addition, urbanization and socio-economic transformation contribute to shifting patterns of social interaction, where increasing individualism and exposure to global culture may weaken communal values such as togetherness and mutual cooperation. The decreasing intensity of interfaith interaction in everyday life further risks reducing mutual understanding between religious communities. These conditions indicate that religious moderation in Minahasa should not be assumed to be as a stable cultural inheritance, but rather as a vulnerable and evolving construct that requires continuous reinforcement (RI, 2021).

In response to these challenges, several strategic efforts can be proposed, although their implementation and effectiveness require critically assessed. *First*, the revitalization of local culture in education, particularly through culturally based curricula, has the potential to strengthen students' awareness of cooperation and respect for diversity. However, this approach risks becoming symbolic if local values are only introduced at the level of content without being embedded in everyday school practices and institutional culture. *Second*, moderation-based character education can serve as an important medium for internalizing of tolerance through experiential learning and interfaith interaction. Yet, its success depends heavily on pedagogical consistency and the extent to which such programs move beyond

formal activities toward lived social practice. *Third*, the positive use of technology and social media offers opportunities to disseminate narratives of tolerance through digital content such as videos, podcasts, and campaigns such as "Torang Samua Basudara Online." While this strategy is relevant in addressing the digital habits of younger generations, it must compete with the vast volume of polarizing and emotionally driven content that often has greater visibility and influence. This raises questions about the actual reach and impact of moderation-based digital campaigns in shaping public discourse. *Fourth*, the development of interfaith dialogue and collaborative forums can strengthen social cohesion by creating spaces for direct interaction across differences. However, such initiatives often remain limited to formal or event-based settings, and their long-term influence on everyday social relations may be uneven.

Fifth, the empowerment of religious and traditional leaders as agents of moderation is crucial, given their authority and influence within communities. These actors can function as mediators in preventing and resolving conflicts. Nevertheless, their effectiveness is not uniform, as it depends on their openness to inclusive perspectives and their ability to engage with contemporary issues, particularly in digital contexts where authority structures are increasingly decentralized. By implementing these strategies, it is expected that the younger generation of Minahasa will develop a deeper understanding of diversity as a social asset rather than a threat. However, this expectation should be approached with caution. The maintenance and development of religious moderation cannot rely solely on programmatic interventions, but must be supported by continuous social processes, critical engagement, and adaptation to changing realities. Therefore, the integration of moderation values into peace education should be understood not as a fixed solution, but as an ongoing and dynamic effort that requires alignment between cultural values,

educational practices, and broader socio-digital environments.

Leveraging Technology to Promote Religious Moderation

In the digital era, technology plays a significant role in shaping the discourse of religious moderation (Pamungkas et al., 2024). However, rather than being a neutral medium, technology should be understood as a contested space in which both tolerant and intolerant narratives are actively produced, negotiated, and circulated. While it offers opportunities to promote values of tolerance and social harmony, it simultaneously facilitates the rapid spread of radical ideologies, misinformation, and emotionally charged content that often gains greater visibility. Therefore, the use of technology in promoting religious moderation should be viewed not only as an opportunity but also as a strategic challenge. One of the primary strategies is the creation of digital content based on local culture that conveys messages of diversity and peace. For instance, the story of *Toar Lumimuut* can be transformed into animations or short videos distributed through platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. While this approach increases accessibility and relevance for younger audiences, its effectiveness depends on the ability to compete with dominant digital content that is often more sensational and algorithmically amplified. This raises questions about whether value-based content can achieve comparable reach and engagement in highly competitive digital ecosystems.

Digital campaigns for religious moderation, such as “Torang Samua Basudara Online,” also provide platforms for positive storytelling and intergroup dialogue. These initiatives can encourage constructive discussions and highlight lived experiences of harmony. However, digital campaigns often face limitations in sustaining audience engagement beyond momentary interaction, particularly when users are continuously exposed to polarizing content. As a result, their long-term impact on shaping attitudes

and behavior remains uncertain (Pamungkas et al., 2024). Similarly, the use of podcasts and webinars as interactive platforms enables the exchange of ideas among religious leaders, academics, and communities. These forums create spaces for reflective dialogue and knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, their reach is often limited to already engaged or like-minded audiences, raising concerns about their ability to influence individuals outside these circles, especially those who are more vulnerable to radical narratives. The development of educational games and gamified learning approaches represents an innovative strategy to introduce values of tolerance to younger audiences. By integrating learning with entertainment, these approaches have the potential to enhance engagement and internalization. However, the design and dissemination of these applications require significant resources and sustained institutional support, without which their impact may remain limited and fragmented.

The use of artificial intelligence and big data to analyze patterns of intolerance narratives offers a more strategic approach to understanding digital behaviour. These technologies enable the identification of emerging trends, the mapping of influence networks, and the development of data-driven communication strategies to support efforts aimed at promoting tolerance and countering extremist narratives. Confronting intolerance narratives in the digital world requires more than the production of positive content. It demands the creation of active digital communities that consistently engage in counter-discursive practices. Involving influencers or public figures can amplify the reach of moderation messages, but it also introduces the risk of oversimplification or commodification of complex values such as tolerance and coexistence. Moreover, the fast-paced and reactive nature of digital communication often prioritizes emotional resonance over critical reflection, which may limit the depth of engagement with moderation values.

By implementing these strategies, technology has significant potential to strengthen religious moderation, particularly among younger generations who are deeply embedded in digital environments. However, this potential should not be overstated. The effectiveness of technology-based interventions depends on continuous adaptation, critical awareness of digital dynamics, and the ability to navigate the tension between visibility and substance. Therefore, technology should be understood not merely as a medium for dissemination, but as a dynamic arena of negotiation, where the values of religious moderation must compete, adapt, and be continuously rearticulated in response to evolving digital realities.

CLOSING

This study reveals that religious moderation in Minahasa is best understood not as an inherent cultural constant, but as a historically contingent and socially constructed process shaped by continuous interaction between local traditions, external influences, and shifting socio-political contexts. The analysis shows that cultural elements such as the *Toar Lumimuut* narrative, customary deliberation, and the *Mapalus* tradition function not merely as symbolic representations of harmony, but as normative frameworks that have been repeatedly negotiated, adapted, and recontextualized across different historical periods. At the same time, the findings challenge the dominant assumption that Minahasa represents a fully established model of religious moderation. Instead, moderation appears as a fragile and dynamic condition whose sustainability is increasingly tested by contemporary pressures such as digital radicalization, misinformation, socio-economic transformation, and the weakening intergenerational transmission of local values. This indicates that moderation should be repositioned as an ongoing social project, rather than a completed cultural achievement. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the discourse on religious

moderation by integrating a historical-cultural analytical lens with peace education frameworks, thereby offering a more contextual and critical understanding of how moderation is formed, maintained, and challenged at the local level. It moves beyond normative and generalized approaches by demonstrating that local wisdom must be examined as a dynamic and contested resource, not as a static cultural asset.

Practically, the study highlights that the integration of moderation values into education and digital spaces requires more than programmatic implementation. It demands critical, adaptive, and context-sensitive strategies that respond to the realities of digital ecosystems, generational change, and institutional variability. Education and technology, therefore, should be understood as strategic yet contested arenas where values are continuously negotiated, rather than as inherently effective solutions. Based on these findings, future research is recommended to develop empirically grounded and field-based studies that examine the actual impact of peace education and digital interventions on attitudes, behaviours, and intergroup relations. In addition, interdisciplinary approaches that integrate perspectives from sociology, education, cultural studies, and digital communication are needed to further explore the sustainability of religious moderation in increasingly complex and hybrid social environments. Expanding comparative studies across different regions will also be important to test the transferability of local-based moderation models. Ultimately, the strategic value of this research lies in its emphasis that the sustainability of religious moderation depends not only on the preservation of cultural heritage, but on the capacity of society to critically engage, reinterpret, and operationalize these values in response to ongoing historical and contemporary transformations.

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