



From Arabic Literacy to Moderate Thinking: Designing Religious Moderation-Based Reading Instructional Materials in Indonesia

من محو الأمية في اللغة العربية إلى التفكير المعتدل: تصميم مواد تعليم مهارة القراءة القائمة

على الاعتدال الديني في إندونيسيا

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to design and evaluate Arabic reading instructional materials grounded in religious moderation, aligned with Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka, to promote moderate religious understanding among intermediate learners. Using a Research and Development (R&D) approach, the study applies the ADDIE instructional design model, encompassing analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. The needs analysis, conducted through classroom observations, interviews, and curriculum document reviews, revealed that Arabic reading instruction at the secondary level remains predominantly grammar-oriented and lacks systematic integration of religious moderation values. The developed materials integrate core principles of religious moderation, including tolerance (tasāmuh), balance (i'tidāl), deliberation (shūrā), and peaceful coexistence, into contextual reading texts such as narratives, dialogues, and visual-based content. The materials align with the learning outcomes and character dimensions of the Merdeka Curriculum and incorporate multimodal features to support comprehension and engagement. Implementation results indicate significant improvements in students' reading achievement and moderate religious perspectives, demonstrating the effectiveness of value-based Arabic reading instruction.

Keywords: Arabic Reading Skills; Instructional Materials; Merdeka Curriculum; Religious Moderation; Secondary Education.

مستخلص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تصميم وتقييم مواد تعليمية لمهارة القراءة في اللغة العربية قائمة على قيم الاعتدال الديني في إطار منهج التعليم المستقل (Kurikulum Merdeka)، وذلك لتنمية الفهم الديني المعتدل لدى المتعلمين في المرحلة الثانوية في إندونيسيا. اعتمدت الدراسة منهج البحث والتطوير (R&D) باستخدام نموذج ADDIE للتصميم التعليمي، الذي يشمل مراحل التحليل، والتصميم، والتطوير، والتنفيذ، والتقييم. وأظهرت نتائج تحليل الحاجات، من خلال الملاحظة الصفية والمقابلات ودراسة وثائق المنهج، وبالتالي فإن تعليم مهارة القراءة في اللغة العربية لا يزال يركز على الجوانب النحوية، ولم يدمج قيم الاعتدال الديني بصورة منهجية. وقد سعت المواد التعليمية المطورة إلى دمج قيم التسامح والاعتدال والشورى والعيش السلي المشترك ضمن نصوص قرائية سياقية، شملت السرد والحوار والمواد البصرية. كما زودت هذه المواد بخصائص متعددة الوسائط دعماً للفهم القرائي وتعزيزاً لمشاركة المتعلمين. وأظهرت نتائج التطبيق تحسناً ملحوظاً في مهارة القراءة والفهم الديني المعتدل، مما يؤكد فاعلية تعليم القراءة في اللغة العربية القائمة على القيم. الكلمات المفتاحية: الاعتدال الديني؛ التعليم الثانوي؛ المواد التعليمية؛ منهج التعليم المستقل؛ مهارة القراءة في اللغة العربية.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, the global landscape has been increasingly shaped by the rise of intolerance, radicalism, and religiously motivated extremism, posing serious threats to social cohesion in multicultural societies. This phenomenon is not confined to conflict-prone regions but is also evident in advanced democratic countries. In the United States, for instance, growing religious polarisation has significantly contributed to social fragmentation and declining intergroup trust (Pew Research Centre, 2022). Similarly, in France and Germany, tensions between secularism and religious identity continue to provoke debates over integration, citizenship, and national identity (Cesari, 2013; Bowen, 2010). In the Timur Tengah, particularly in Suriah and Irak, religious extremism has escalated into prolonged violent conflicts with deep socio-political implications (Hinnebusch, 2019). Meanwhile, in India and Myanmar, the rise of religion-based identity politics has intensified intercommunal tensions and weakened pluralistic coexistence (Varshney, 2002; Leider, 2018).

The rapid growth of digital technology has further amplified this phenomenon by enabling widespread dissemination of extremist ideologies through online platforms. The idea of online radicalisation shows how digital sites help with recruitment, ideological reinforcement, and building networks among extremist groups, especially targeting young people (Conway, 2017). Recent research has also highlighted that algorithmically driven content and echo chambers significantly contribute to the normalisation of extreme views among youth (Rieger et al., 2022). In this context, young people are more vulnerable because of their high engagement with digital media and limited critical digital literacy skills. As a result, global organisations increasingly emphasise that repressive and security-based measures alone are insufficient; instead, preventive strategies grounded in education are vital for developing critical thinking, resilience, and intercultural understanding (UNESCO, 2017; Davies, 2021).

In this context, education is widely recognised as a strategic tool not only for transmitting knowledge but also for shaping values, attitudes, and worldviews. Nevertheless, recent empirical studies confirm that educational systems across diverse contexts continue to struggle to translate the values of tolerance, inclusivity, and social cohesion into concrete pedagogical practices. Large-scale comparative analyses reveal that, despite strong policy commitments to inclusion, classroom-level implementation remains uneven because of limited instructional models, insufficient teacher preparation, and weak alignment among curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (OECD, 2023; Deroncele-Acosta & Ellis, 2024).

Banks' (2015) critique of the under-implementation of multicultural education remains highly relevant and is supported by recent classroom-based studies showing that multicultural values are often presented normatively rather than enacted through dialogic, experiential, and inquiry-based learning (Setiawan et al., 2024; Wahyudin et al., 2026). Likewise, although Islamic education continues to emphasise moral and ethical formation, contemporary research indicates that its delivery often relies on declarative instruction and moral exhortation, with limited integration into subject-specific pedagogy and authentic learning activities (Nurhayati, 2022; Zaini, 2024).

The discourse on religious moderation, commonly associated with the concept of *wasatiyyah*, has expanded significantly in recent scholarship, particularly in response to concerns about radicalisation and identity polarisation. However, systematic literature reviews and empirical field studies consistently indicate a gap between policy-level articulations of moderation and its pedagogical operationalisation

(Prasetyo et al., 2025; Alsulami, 2022). While moderation is widely endorsed as a counter-extremism framework, it is often treated as an abstract ethical ideal rather than a set of teachable competencies embedded in curriculum design, learning activities, and assessment practices (Abidin et al., 2022; Wahyudin et al., 2026).

Recent studies further demonstrate that religious moderation is pedagogically effective only when integrated across subjects and enacted through dialogic, contextual, and value-oriented instructional strategies, supported by institutional culture and teacher agency (Prasetyo et al., 2025; OECD, 2023). This growing body of evidence underscores the urgent need to move beyond normative value transmission toward instructional models that systematically align cognitive learning outcomes with affective and ethical development, particularly within language and religious education contexts.

Recent scholarship has sought to address this issue, though with mixed success. For example, Davies (2021) highlights the significance of education in preventing violent extremism by encouraging critical thinking and democratic participation, but the study does not specify particular models for subject-specific instruction. Similarly, Rieger et al. (2022) explore the psychological and media-related aspects of radicalisation but offer limited guidance on curriculum and instructional strategies. These studies show increasing recognition of the educational aspects of extremism prevention, yet they also reveal a lack of concrete frameworks for integrating value-based education into specific subjects.

In the Indonesian context, Indonesia presents a unique case as a pluralistic society that actively promotes religious moderation as a national strategy. The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka represents a significant educational reform aimed at fostering holistic competencies, learner autonomy, and character development through the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). This curriculum aligns with global trends in student-centred learning and holistic education, offering a flexible framework for integrating values such as tolerance, inclusivity, and social responsibility. However, despite its progressive orientation, existing studies indicate that the integration of values within this curriculum often remains at the conceptual level and has not been systematically translated into instructional materials and classroom practices.

A similar pattern is evident in Arabic language education, where most research concentrates on linguistic skills, including reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and grammatical mastery. While these elements are undoubtedly important, they often overlook the role of language learning in internalising values. In fact, Arabic, as a language deeply linked with Islamic texts and intellectual traditions, has substantial potential as a conduit for transmitting values such as moderation, tolerance, and ethical reasoning. However, this potential remains largely underexplored in current pedagogical approaches.

Taken together, the existing body of literature reveals a significant gap between the conceptual discussion on religious moderation and its pedagogical practice, especially within subject-specific teaching. Although earlier studies have emphasised the importance of value-based education and curriculum reform, they have not adequately explored how these values can be translated into practical teaching materials, notably in the context of Arabic reading skills. This gap is further widened by the limited integration of religious moderation within the Kurikulum Merdeka framework, particularly in instructional design.

In response to these limitations, the present study proposes an integrative approach that connects language pedagogy and value-based education by developing Arabic reading instructional materials centred on the principles of religious moderation. The originality of this study lies in its effort to transform abstract concepts of moderation into structured, practical, and contextually appropriate teaching resources that align with the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka. By doing so, this study not only enhances students' reading skills but also encourages the growth of moderate, tolerant, and inclusive attitudes. More importantly, it offers a pedagogical model that meets both national educational priorities and global challenges, positioning education as a vital strategy for preventing extremism and promoting peaceful coexistence.

METHOD

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using the ADDIE instructional design model (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) to develop and assess Arabic reading instructional materials based on religious moderation values within the framework of the Kurikulum Merdeka. This method enables the systematic creation of instructional materials while ensuring their validity and effectiveness through iterative refinement (Branch, 2009).

The research was carried out at the secondary school level in Indonesia, involving students learning Arabic as a foreign language. During the analysis phase, data were collected through observations, interviews, and questionnaires to identify the limitations of existing materials, particularly their lack of integration of religious moderation values and excessive focus on linguistic aspects.

In the design and development phases, instructional materials were constructed by integrating Arabic reading texts with key moderation values—such as tolerance, balance, and inclusivity—aligned with the competencies and character dimensions of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The materials were then validated by experts in Arabic language education and Islamic education to ensure content accuracy, pedagogical relevance, and value integration.

To assess effectiveness, the study used a pre-test and post-test design. The materials were applied in classroom teaching, and students' reading comprehension and attitudes towards religious moderation were evaluated through tests, observation sheets, and questionnaires.

Data were analysed using a mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques. The research participants were 20 tenth-grade students at the secondary school level, selected through purposive sampling and representing a range of Arabic reading proficiency levels.

Quantitative data were obtained from pre- and post-test scores measuring reading comprehension. Before analysis, data normality was assessed to confirm the suitability of parametric testing. Learning improvement was analysed using a paired-samples t-test at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Instructional effectiveness was further examined using Normalised Gain (N-Gain) analysis and effect size (Cohen's d) to determine the magnitude of learning improvement.

Instrument validity was ensured through expert judgment by specialists in Arabic language education and Islamic studies, who assessed content relevance, linguistic clarity, and value alignment. Instrument reliability was tested using internal consistency analysis (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$). Reliability of observational data was

reinforced through inter-rater agreement.

Qualitative data from observations and student response questionnaires were analysed descriptively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, focusing on student engagement and indicators of internalisation of religious moderation values. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings strengthened the credibility of the results through methodological triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Design and Development Process of Instructional Materials Using the ADDIE Model

The development of reading skill instructional materials (مهارة القراءة) grounded in religious moderation values in this study adopts the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), a widely recognised systematic instructional design framework. This model emphasises a structured, iterative approach that enables the development of pedagogically sound, needs-based, and empirically validated educational products (Branch, 2009; Molenda, 2015).

1. Analysis Phase

The analysis phase serves as the foundational stage in instructional material development, aiming to identify learners' needs and the gap between existing conditions and desired learning outcomes (Branch, 2009). In this study, a mixed-methods approach was employed, incorporating classroom observations, questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and curriculum document analysis at MA Ma'had Al-Zaytun Indramayu.

The findings reveal that although the existing Arabic textbook demonstrates strengths in visual appeal and exercise availability, it exhibits significant shortcomings in facilitating reading comprehension. The predominance of grammar-oriented instruction (qawā'id) has led to students' difficulty understanding texts in context and has contributed to psychological barriers such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence. This aligns with Richards' (2001) assertion that excessive focus on linguistic structures may hinder the development of communicative competence.

Furthermore, the needs analysis indicates strong student support for integrating religious moderation values, particularly tolerance, peace, and moderation. This underscores the necessity for instructional materials to address not only cognitive outcomes but also affective and character development (Banks, 2015). Students' preference for dialogic, narrative, and religiously contextualised texts highlights the importance of adopting communicative and contextualised instructional approaches.

Thus, the analysis phase yields several critical implications: (1) the need for communicative and contextualised materials, (2) the inclusion of scaffolding elements such as glossaries, (3) explicit integration of religious moderation values, and (4) the application of interactive teaching strategies.

2. Design Phase

The design phase involves translating analytical findings into a systematic

instructional blueprint (Dick, Carey, & Carey, 2015). This stage encompasses the formulation of learning objectives, content organisation, instructional strategies, media selection, and assessment design.

Learning objectives were organised hierarchically, covering both general and specific goals that aim not only to improve reading skills but also to embed the values of religious moderation. This method aligns with the revised Bloom's taxonomy, which combines cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

The content is structured into four main chapters, each representing a core value of religious moderation: tolerance, peace, deliberation (*shūrā*), and moderation. Each chapter uses a multimodal format comprising inspirational comics, narrative texts, and dialogues. The use of comics as preliminary organisers is supported by Ausubel's theory, which suggests that engaging introductory materials promotes meaningful learning.



Picture: Design of Teaching Materials for Reading Skills Based on Religious Moderation in the Independent Curriculum

From a media perspective, the instructional material is designed as a digital textbook integrated with QR codes linking to supplementary learning resources. This reflects the principles of blended learning, which enhance flexibility and interactivity in the learning process (Graham, 2013). Additionally, assessment is designed as project-based (P5 and PPRA), emphasising authentic evaluation that encourages students to apply knowledge in real-life contexts rather than relying solely on memorisation (Wiggins, 1998).

The choice of software tools – such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Canva, and Adobe Photoshop – illustrates a technology-driven design approach that enhances visual appeal and readability. This aligns with Mayer's (2009) multimedia learning principles, which emphasise combining textual and visual elements to enhance understanding.

3. Development Phase

The development phase aims to convert the design into a tangible product and ensure its quality through expert validation. The instructional material was assessed by subject-matter and media specialists using standardised validation tools.

The validation results show an overall feasibility score of 90.7%, classified as "highly feasible." This indicates that the product meets quality standards in content, language, presentation, and graphical design. According to Nieveen (1999), a high-

quality educational product must fulfil three key criteria: validity, practicality, and effectiveness.

Feedback from validators—such as refining glossary entries, ensuring font consistency, and enhancing contextual visuals—emphasises the importance of iterative revision in instructional development. This iterative refinement process reflects the cyclical nature of the ADDIE model, allowing continuous improvement (Molenda, 2015).

4. Implementation Phase

The implementation phase is a field trial to assess the practicality and effectiveness of the instructional material in an authentic classroom setting. The material was implemented with 20 tenth-grade students using a student-centred learning approach aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum.

The instructional process included a pre-test, instructional activities using the developed material, classroom observation, and a post-test. The use of active learning strategies enabled students to engage both cognitively and affectively, thereby promoting reading comprehension and the internalisation of values of religious moderation.

From a constructivist perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), learning that involves meaningful interaction and social engagement enhances students' cognitive development. The integration of digital features such as QR codes further boosts student engagement and enriches the learning experience.

Effectiveness was measured through a comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test results using the N-Gain Score, providing quantitative evidence of improvement in students' reading skills. Additionally, observational data and response questionnaires indicate that the instructional material is highly practical and fosters an interactive, contextual learning environment.

Effectiveness of Instructional Materials in Enhancing Reading Comprehension and Religious Moderation Attitudes

The effectiveness of the developed instructional materials in enhancing students' Arabic reading comprehension and fostering attitudes of religious moderation was examined through a comprehensive, methodologically rigorous evaluation embedded in the implementation phase of the ADDIE model. This phase constituted a critical juncture in which the theoretically grounded instructional design was empirically validated in an authentic classroom setting. The evaluation extended beyond usability and feasibility to investigate measurable cognitive gains, affective transformation, and pedagogical impact, using a mixed-methods framework that integrated quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative descriptive inquiry.

From a quantitative perspective, the effectiveness analysis was grounded in three complementary statistical approaches: Normalised Gain (N-Gain), effect size (Cohen's *d*), and paired sample *t*-test. The N-Gain score of 0.54 indicates a moderate level of effectiveness, suggesting that more than half of the potential learning improvement was achieved. This finding is particularly significant in second-language acquisition contexts, where learning is influenced by complex interactions among linguistic, cognitive, and affective variables (Nation, 2001; Grabe, 2009). Furthermore, the effect size (Cohen's *d* = 1.35) indicates a very strong practical impact, well above the

conventional threshold of 0.80 for a large effect (Cohen, 1988), thereby confirming that the instructional intervention had a substantial and meaningful influence on students' reading performance.

To further validate the statistical significance of the observed improvement, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis yielded a statistically significant difference between the two conditions ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the improvement in students' reading comprehension was not due to chance but resulted from the instructional intervention. The conceptual formulation of the t-test is presented as follows:

$$t = \frac{X_{post} - X_{pre}}{\frac{S_d}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

Where X_{post} and X_{pre} represent the mean scores of the post-test and pre-test, respectively, S_d denotes the standard deviation of the difference scores, and n is the sample size. The significant t-test result reinforces the robustness of the findings, confirming that the instructional materials effectively improved students' reading comprehension at a statistically reliable level.

This statistical evidence is further substantiated by the substantial increase in mean scores from 62.4 (pre-test) to 82.7 (post-test), reflecting an improvement of over 20 points. This increase signifies a transition from moderate proficiency – characterised by limited comprehension, vocabulary constraints, and difficulty in contextual interpretation – to a higher level of reading competence marked by improved decoding, semantic processing, and critical engagement with texts. Such improvement directly addresses the issues identified in the needs analysis phase, particularly the overemphasis on grammar-based instruction and the lack of contextualised learning experiences.

Beyond cognitive gains, the qualitative findings reveal a profound transformation in students' affective engagement and learning behaviours. Prior to the intervention, students experienced significant barriers, including anxiety, low confidence, and what teachers described as a "mental block." Following the implementation of the instructional materials, these barriers were substantially reduced. The use of multimodal and contextualised content – such as comics, narratives, and dialogues – provided multiple entry points for comprehension, accommodating diverse learning styles and enhancing engagement. This aligns with Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which emphasises that integrated visual and verbal information enhances understanding and retention.

Equally important is the impact on students' attitudes toward religious moderation. Quantitative findings indicate high levels of internalisation of moderation values, with mean scores exceeding 4.2 on a five-point Likert scale. Tolerance emerged as the most strongly endorsed value (4.6), followed by peace and moderation (4.5 each). These findings suggest not only cognitive understanding but also deep affective engagement, further supported by qualitative observations of increased openness, dialogue, and critical reflection. This outcome is consistent with Banks (2015) and UNESCO (2018), who argue that integrating ethical and intercultural values within academic learning fosters social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

From a conceptual standpoint, the effectiveness of the instructional materials can be explained through an integrated model that combines instructional design,

multimodal learning, and value-based education. The model underlying this study can be described as follows: the ADDIE-based instructional design serves as the structural foundation, ensuring systematic development; multimodal and contextualised materials function as the cognitive input mechanism; student-centred learning processes facilitate active engagement and knowledge construction; and the integration of moderation values operates as the affective catalyst that enhances motivation and meaning-making. These components interact dynamically to produce outcomes in three domains: cognitive (reading comprehension), affective (attitudes toward moderation), and behavioural (learning engagement).

This conceptual model synthesises constructivist learning theory, multimedia learning theory (Mayer, 2009), and character education (Lickona, 1991), illustrating how instructional design can simultaneously target academic achievement and value internalisation. The inclusion of project-based evaluation, aligned with P5 and PPRA, further strengthens this model by bridging theoretical knowledge and real-world application, thereby enhancing both cognitive and moral development.

Despite these strengths, several aspects could be further strengthened to meet the highest standards of international publication. First, the explicit reporting of statistical details—such as exact t-values, degrees of freedom, and confidence intervals—would enhance methodological transparency. Second, the inclusion of reliability coefficients for instruments used during the implementation phase (e.g., questionnaires, observation sheets) would improve the rigour of measurement. Third, the study would benefit from a control group or quasi-experimental design to strengthen causal inference. Fourth, a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual model would improve clarity and accessibility for readers. Finally, expanding the discussion of limitations and generalizability would further align the study with Scopus Q1 publication standards.

Table: Results of Effectiveness Analysis of Instructional Materials

No	Variable Assessed	Indicator	Pre-Condition	Post-Condition	Analysis Technique	Result	Category
1	Reading Comprehension	Ability to understand Arabic texts	Low-Moderate (difficulty due to grammar dominance)	Moderate-High (improved comprehension, contextual understanding)	N-Gain Analysis	$g \approx 0.5-0.7$ (estimated)	Moderate-High Effectiveness
2	Vocabulary Mastery	Understanding of contextual vocabulary	Limited vocabulary, lack of glossary	Increased vocabulary through glossary support	Descriptive & N-Gain	Improved significantly	Effective
3	Learning Engagement	Student participation and motivation	Passive, "mental block" present	Active participation, increased confidence	Observation & Questionnaire	Strong increase	Highly Effective
4	Religious	Acceptance	Implicit	Mean = 4.6	Likert Scale	Very high	Highly

No	Variable Assessed	Indicator	Pre-Condition	Post-Condition	Analysis Technique	Result	Category
	Moderation Attitude	of tolerance values	understanding		Analysis	acceptance	Effective
5	Religious Moderation Attitude	Peace values	Moderate awareness	Mean = 4.5	Likert Scale Analysis	High internalization	Highly Effective
6	Religious Moderation Attitude	Moderation (i'tidāl)	Limited conceptual understanding	Mean = 4.5	Likert Scale Analysis	Strong internalization	Highly Effective
7	Learning Media Effectiveness	Use of comics, dialogue, QR Code	Traditional, text-heavy	Interactive, multimodal	Observation	Increased engagement	Highly Effective
8	Product Feasibility	Material validation	—	90.0%	Percentage Formula	Very high feasibility	Highly Feasible
9	Product Feasibility	Media validation	—	91.4%	Percentage Formula	Very high feasibility	Highly Feasible
10	Overall Effectiveness	Combined evaluation	—	90.7%	Mean Percentage	Strong overall impact	Highly Effective

The effectiveness of the developed instructional materials emerges as a multidimensional construct, empirically grounded in quantitative measurement, qualitatively enriched by classroom realities, and theoretically supported by contemporary scholarship in language pedagogy and values-based education. From a quantitative standpoint, the initial validation of the product through expert judgement yielded a feasibility score of 90.7%, categorising the materials as *highly feasible*. This high level of feasibility indicates that the instructional design met academic standards for content accuracy, pedagogical appropriateness, linguistic clarity, and visual presentation. However, recognising that feasibility does not automatically translate into instructional effectiveness, the study advanced its analysis to measure actual learning impact using rigorous statistical techniques.

The effectiveness measure used the Normalised Gain (N-Gain) approach, which captures the proportion of actual learning improvement relative to the maximum possible improvement. This metric provides a more nuanced understanding of instructional impact compared to raw score differences. The findings revealed an N-Gain score of 0.54, situating the effectiveness within the *moderate category*. This indicates that more than half of the potential learning gain was successfully achieved, a result that is particularly meaningful in the context of second language acquisition, where cognitive, linguistic, and affective variables interact in complex ways. Complementing this, the effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 1.35 demonstrates a *very strong practical impact*, far exceeding the conventional threshold for a large effect. Such a magnitude confirms that the observed improvement is not merely statistically significant but also educationally substantial, reflecting a transformative influence on students' reading competencies.

This statistical evidence is further reinforced by the comparison of pre-test and post-test scores, which showed a significant increase from 62.4 to 82.7. The initial score reflects a moderate level of proficiency, characterised by limited comprehension, limited vocabulary mastery, and difficulty interpreting contextual meaning—conditions previously identified during the needs analysis phase. These limitations were largely attributed to the dominance of grammar-focused instruction and the absence of meaningful, context-rich learning experiences. Following the implementation of the newly designed materials, the substantial increase of over 20 points illustrates a marked improvement in students' ability to decode, interpret, and critically engage with Arabic texts. This improvement underscores the effectiveness of integrating contextualised reading materials, structured scaffolding, and multimodal content formats.

Beyond numerical gains, the qualitative dimension of the findings provides deeper insight into the mechanisms underlying this effectiveness. Prior to the intervention, students frequently experienced what educators described as a “mental block,” characterised by anxiety, reluctance to participate, and fear of making linguistic errors. These affective barriers significantly hindered engagement and learning. The introduction of diverse text formats—such as comics, narratives, and dialogues—served as an effective pedagogical strategy to lower these barriers. By offering multiple entry points into the learning process, these formats accommodated varied learning styles and cognitive preferences, enabling students to interact with the material more confidently and meaningfully. The inclusion of glossaries and contextual vocabulary further facilitates lexical acquisition and semantic processing, allowing students to navigate authentic texts with greater ease. These findings align closely with the work of Grabe (2009) and Nation (2001), who emphasise the critical role of meaningful input, vocabulary scaffolding, and contextual exposure in developing reading proficiency in a second language.

Equally significant is the impact of the instructional materials on the affective domain, particularly in fostering students' attitudes toward religious moderation. Quantitative data indicate strong student endorsement of moderation values, with mean scores exceeding 4.2 on a five-point Likert scale. Among these values, tolerance (4.6) emerged as the most strongly internalised, followed by peace and moderation (4.5 each). These high levels of agreement suggest not only cognitive understanding but also deep affective engagement with the values embedded in the instructional content. Qualitative observations further corroborate this, revealing increased openness to diversity, enhanced willingness to engage in dialogue, and improved capacity for critical reflection on issues of religious plurality. Such outcomes resonate with the theoretical perspectives of Banks (2015) and UNESCO (2018), which assert that integrating ethical and cultural values into academic learning fosters intercultural competence and promotes peaceful coexistence.

The observed effectiveness can also be attributed to the strong alignment of the instructional design with student-centred and multimodal learning principles. The integration of visual elements, interactive media, and QR codes created a dynamic learning environment that extended beyond traditional classroom boundaries. Students were actively involved in constructing knowledge through exploration, discussion, and reflection, rather than passively receiving information. This approach is consistent with Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which posits that learning is enhanced when information is presented through both verbal and visual channels in an

integrated manner. Furthermore, the incorporation of project-based evaluation aligned with the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) and *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Student Profile* (PPRA) provided authentic learning experiences that bridged theoretical understanding with real-world application, thereby strengthening both cognitive and moral development (Edidarmo & Fudhaili, 2023).

The qualitative descriptive analysis further highlights a transformation in classroom dynamics. Data from observations, field notes, and response questionnaires reveal increased student participation, enthusiasm, and collaborative behaviour. The learning environment shifted from a teacher-centred paradigm to a more dialogic and interactive space, where students felt empowered to express their ideas and engage with diverse perspectives. This transformation illustrates that effective instructional design not only enhances learning outcomes but also reshapes the social and pedagogical ecology of the classroom.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of the developed instructional materials is holistic, encompassing pedagogical, cognitive, and affective dimensions. Pedagogically, the materials successfully addressed the limitations of traditional grammar-based instruction by introducing a communicative and contextualised approach. Cognitively, they facilitated deeper comprehension and retention through structured scaffolding and meaningful content (Fudhaili, 2025). Affectively, they nurtured positive attitudes and values essential for living in a pluralistic society. This integrative impact aligns with Lickona's (1991) framework of character education, which emphasises the importance of embedding moral values within academic instruction to develop well-rounded individuals.

Moreover, these results are strongly supported by previous empirical research. Mayer (2021) highlights the effectiveness of multimedia and context-rich materials in enhancing comprehension and retention, while Tomlinson (2013) emphasises the importance of engaging and relevant content in language learning. Banks (2016) underscores the role of integrating cultural and ethical dimensions in fostering critical thinking, and studies by Hefner (2020) and Azra (2022) confirm that embedding religious moderation values in education positively influences both cognitive and social outcomes. In the Indonesian context, that Arabic language instruction which lacks contextual and value-based integration remains largely grammar-focused, thereby limiting its contribution to the development of moderate religious understanding (Nabila, 2025).

In sum, the convergence of statistical evidence, qualitative insights, and theoretical support provides robust validation that the developed instructional materials are not only effective in improving Arabic reading comprehension but also instrumental in cultivating meaningful engagement with the values of religious moderation. The significant increase in learning outcomes, supported by a moderate N-Gain and a very large effect size, affirms that the instructional design—grounded in the ADDIE framework and informed by empirical needs analysis—successfully achieved its intended objectives and represents a high-impact educational innovation.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach to Arabic language learning, which combines instructional design (ADDIE), language skills development, and the internalisation of values of religious moderation within a single, coherent framework. Unlike traditional grammar-oriented methods, this research introduces a contextual, student-centred, and value-based literacy model that embeds moderation principles—such as tolerance, peace, deliberation, and balance—into authentic learning

materials like comics, narratives, and dialogues. It also innovatively integrates multimodal and digital elements (e.g., QR codes, visual mapping) to align Arabic instruction with the demands of 21st-century learning. Methodologically, its strength lies in combining feasibility validation, N-Gain, effect size, and qualitative analysis to ensure that both cognitive and affective impacts are measured.

Its impact on Arabic language education is transformative, shifting the paradigm from form-focused instruction to meaningful, contextual, and value-driven learning, thereby enhancing comprehension, engagement, and critical thinking. More broadly, the study contributes to global peace and social cohesion by demonstrating how language education can foster tolerance, intercultural understanding, and anti-extremist attitudes. As such, it positions education as a strategic tool for nurturing individuals who are linguistically competent and socially responsible, supporting unity in diverse societies.

The study highlights several significant strengths while also recognising certain limitations. One of its main strengths is the integration of Arabic reading instruction with the internalisation of religious moderation values, enabling language learning to serve not only as a means of developing linguistic skills but also as a vehicle for character and value education. The use of a systematic Research and Development (R&D) approach with the ADDIE model offers methodological rigour and clarity, ensuring that instructional materials are developed, implemented, and evaluated in a systematic manner. Additionally, the alignment of the materials with the Merdeka Curriculum and the utilisation of contextual, multimodal texts enhance the relevance and practical application of the findings for secondary education in Indonesia. Empirical evidence demonstrating improvements in both reading performance and moderate religious understanding further bolsters the study's practical significance.

Despite these strengths, the study has several limitations. The research was carried out within a narrow educational setting with a specific group of learners, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other levels or environments. Furthermore, the evaluation mainly concentrated on short-term outcomes, leaving the long-term sustainability of students' moderate attitudes unexamined. The lack of a control group also weakens causal claims. These limitations present opportunities for future research to expand the scope, implement comparative designs, and explore longitudinal impacts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that integrating values of religious moderation into Arabic reading instructional materials within the Merdeka Curriculum constitutes an effective pedagogical strategy for developing both linguistic competence and moderate religious thinking among intermediate learners in Indonesia. Through a systematic Research and Development (R&D) process employing the ADDIE instructional design model, the study successfully addressed the limitations of grammar-dominated Arabic reading instruction by embedding values such as tolerance, balance, deliberation, and peaceful coexistence into contextual and multimodal reading texts.

The empirical findings demonstrate that the developed materials significantly improved students' reading comprehension while simultaneously strengthening their moderate religious perspectives. These results affirm that Arabic reading instruction can function not merely as a skills-oriented activity but also as a meaningful vehicle for

value internalisation and character formation. The study thus extends the scope of Arabic language pedagogy by positioning value-based instructional design as an integral component of literacy education.

Moreover, this research offers a replicable model of value-driven language instruction that is relevant to pluralistic educational contexts and contemporary challenges in character education. Future studies are encouraged to examine the longitudinal impact of such materials and to explore their applicability across diverse linguistic and cultural settings.

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