

The Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Tahfidz and Ngaji Kitab Pego Superior Class Program in Developing Students' Religious Moderation Skills

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Abstract

Keywords: Tahfidz, Studying the Pego Book, Religious Moderation

Religious moderation is an essential value that should be instilled from an early age through education, particularly in Islamic primary schools, which play a strategic role in shaping students' character and religious understanding. NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School developed an Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies as an innovative learning initiative that integrates Qur'anic memorization with the study of classical Islamic literature rooted in the pesantren tradition. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the program, its supporting and inhibiting factors, and its outcomes in fostering students' religious moderation. The research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the principal, teachers, and students selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal that the program has been implemented in a well-planned, systematic, and sustainable manner. The Pegon Book learning materials, which emphasize the values of tawasuth (moderation), tasamuh (tolerance), and tawazun (balance), contribute significantly to developing inclusive and non-extremist religious perspectives among students. The students demonstrated respectful attitudes toward differences, mutual understanding, and the ability to practice religious moderation values in their daily lives. Therefore, the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies has proven effective in fostering religious moderation and may serve as a model for religious character development in Islamic primary schools.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci: Tahfidz, Ngaji Kitab Pego, Moderasi Beragama

Moderasi beragama adalah nilai penting yang harus ditanamkan sejak usia dini melalui pendidikan, khususnya di sekolah dasar Islam, yang memainkan peran strategis dalam membentuk karakter dan pemahaman keagamaan siswa. Sekolah Dasar Islam NU Ngingas mengembangkan Program Kelas Unggulan dalam Tahfidz dan Studi Kitab Pegon sebagai inisiatif pembelajaran inovatif yang mengintegrasikan hafalan Al-Qur'an dengan studi sastra Islam klasik yang berakar pada tradisi pesantren. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi program tersebut, faktor pendukung dan penghambatnya, serta hasilnya dalam menumbuhkan moderasi beragama siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, guru, dan siswa yang dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel bertujuan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa program tersebut telah diimplementasikan dengan cara yang terencana, sistematis, dan berkelanjutan. Materi pembelajaran Kitab Pegon, yang menekankan nilai-nilai tawasuth (moderasi), tasamuh (toleransi), dan tawazun (keseimbangan), berkontribusi secara signifikan dalam mengembangkan perspektif keagamaan yang inklusif dan non-ekstremis di kalangan siswa. Para siswa menunjukkan sikap hormat terhadap perbedaan, saling pengertian, dan kemampuan untuk mempraktikkan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama dalam kehidupan sehari-hari mereka. Oleh karena itu, Program Kelas Unggulan dalam Tahfidz dan Studi Kitab Pegon telah terbukti efektif dalam menumbuhkan moderasi beragama dan dapat berfungsi sebagai model untuk pengembangan karakter keagamaan di sekolah dasar Islam.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a very important role in shaping students' character, knowledge, and attitudes. Through education, moral, social, and religious values can be instilled systematically and continuously. In the context of Islamic education, madrasahs function not only as places for the transfer of knowledge but also as means of character development and strengthening balanced religious understanding (Abuddin Nata, 2017).

NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School, as one of the Islamic educational institutions under the auspices of Nahdlatul Ulama, demonstrates a strong commitment to strengthening religious moderation. This commitment is manifested through the implementation of the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies as an educational innovation. The integration of tahfidz learning and traditional Islamic texts represents a distinctive characteristic of pesantren education, which is widely recognized for its moderate and inclusive approach. This program aims to cultivate a love for the Qur'an and encourage students to engage regularly with the holy scripture, even though they do not reside in a pesantren environment. Nevertheless, similar educational values and objectives are applied. These activities foster discipline and perseverance among students. Meanwhile, learning through Pegon Books provides a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings through classical Islamic texts (turath) rich in wisdom and moral values.

In the context of Islamic education, religious moderation has become an urgent necessity amid globalization and the rapid development of information technology (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Therefore, Islamic educational institutions need to design learning processes that are not merely textual but also capable of shaping humanistic and moderate religious attitudes. Religious moderation has become an important issue in Indonesia's pluralistic society. Education plays a strategic role in instilling the values of tolerance, justice, and balance from the elementary school level (Hasan Langgulung, 2003).

Studies examining the relationship between tahfidz learning, classical Islamic texts, and religious moderation at the primary education level remain limited. This indicates the need for research investigating the integration of both approaches in shaping students' moderate character (Said Aqil Siradj, 1999).

According to Martin van Bruinessen, pesantren are institutions with distinctive scholarly traditions, particularly in their use of kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts) as the primary references in Islamic religious learning. This tradition reflects an intellectual continuity between Indonesian pesantren and the classical Islamic scholarly tradition of the Middle East (Kitab Kuning, 1995).

Preliminary findings from field observations indicate that this program not only improves students' religious competencies cognitively but also positively influences their religious attitudes. Students are accustomed to understanding different perspectives in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), introduced to the concept of khilafiyah (scholarly differences of opinion) from an early age, and taught that differences among Islamic scholars constitute part of Islam's intellectual richness. Teachers also play a significant role in modeling moderate attitudes by explaining differences without discrediting particular viewpoints, teaching proper discussion ethics, and instilling respect for others. The consistent implementation of daily tahfidz activities also develops students' patience, discipline, and sense of responsibility. This process helps nurture the value of tawazun (balance), namely the balance between strong religious commitment and a gentle, courteous, and non-extremist attitude. The integration of these two educational approaches provides students with a rich learning experience in which they not only memorize Qur'anic verses but also understand the context and moral values embedded within them.

The existence of the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies at NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School demonstrates that religious moderation can be instilled through a structured, traditional yet relevant learning approach that is appropriate to the developmental characteristics of primary school-aged children. This program can serve as a model for other Islamic educational institutions in strengthening students' moderate character systematically and sustainably. Therefore, this study contributes not only theoretically to the development of religious moderation studies but also practically to Islamic educational institutions in designing learning models that are genuinely effective in fostering balanced, tolerant, and harmonious religious character.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, as the research focused on an in-depth examination of the actual implementation of the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies at NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School. This approach was chosen to enable a comprehensive understanding of the processes, dynamics, and impacts of the program on

students' religious moderation. The research participants consisted of the principal, tahfidz teachers, Pegon Book teachers, and several students participating in the program. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, namely by choosing data sources that were most relevant and possessed extensive knowledge of the program.

The data collection techniques used in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is a data collection technique conducted through direct observation of the research object to obtain factual and authentic information from the field. Through observation, researchers can understand behaviors, activities, and social situations that occur naturally without manipulation. In qualitative research, observation is particularly important because it allows researchers to capture the meanings behind participants' actions and the dynamics of interactions occurring within the research setting. In the context of educational research, observation is used to examine learning processes, interactions between teachers and students, and the actual implementation of educational programs. This method helps researchers obtain data that cannot always be revealed through interviews, such as students' habits, attitudes, and spontaneous responses to a learning program (Sugiyono, 2019). In this study, observations were conducted to examine the daily activities of the tahfidz program and Pegon Book learning sessions.

Interviews are a data collection technique conducted through direct question-and-answer interactions between researchers and informants to obtain in-depth information. This technique enables researchers to explore informants' perspectives, understandings, experiences, and subjective evaluations of the phenomenon being studied. Interviews are generally flexible, allowing researchers to adjust questions according to field situations and conditions. In qualitative research, interviews function as a means of obtaining in-depth data, particularly concerning the background, objectives, challenges, and impacts of a program. Through interviews with the principal, teachers, and students, researchers were able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies and its implications for the development of religious moderation (Lexy J. Moleong, 2021). Interviews were used to explore the experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of teachers and students.

Documentation is a data collection technique carried out by collecting, reviewing, and analyzing various documents related to the research object. These documents may include written records, photographs, archives, administrative records, and activity reports that support the research data. In qualitative research, documentation serves as complementary and corroborative data

(triangulation) for observation and interview findings. Through documentation, researchers can obtain historical and administrative data, such as institutional profiles, curricula, activity schedules, organizational structures, and program implementation records. This technique helps enhance data validity by providing tangible evidence that can be verified (Sugiyono, 2019). Documentation in this study was obtained from activity records, school archives, learning schedules, photographs of activities, and reports related to program implementation.

This research was conducted directly at NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School over a specific period, ensuring that the data collected accurately reflected the actual conditions in the field. Through this research method, it is expected that a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies in fostering moderate attitudes among students can be achieved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies Program

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies in fostering students' religious moderation at NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School. Data were collected through observations, interviews with the principal, teachers, and students, as well as documentation of program activities.

The Excellence Class Program is a special educational initiative designed to optimize students' potential through distinctive features that represent the institution's educational strengths (Mulyasa, 2018). The Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies Excellence Program at NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School integrates Qur'anic memorization (tahfidz) with the study of classical Islamic texts written in Pegon script. Tahfidz Al-Qur'an is understood as the process of preserving and memorizing Qur'anic verses consistently so that they become firmly embedded in memory and can be practiced in daily life (Abdul Aziz Abdul Rauf, 2016). Meanwhile, Pegon Book Studies refers to the learning of classical Islamic texts written in Arabic or Javanese using Pegon script, a distinctive tradition of pesantren and Nahdlatul Ulama-based educational institutions (Dhofier, 2015).

Through this program, students are expected not only to develop memorization skills but also to acquire contextual Islamic understanding rooted in established scholarly traditions. The Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies Program is implemented systematically according to a schedule established by the school. Tahfidz activities consist of memorization submission sessions, collective muroja'ah (review), and intensive individual guidance.

Although the formal Tahfidz Program was only introduced during the current academic year, tahfidz extracurricular activities have existed for many years and have successfully produced students capable of memorizing up to twelve juz of the Qur'an, with the minimum achievement generally reaching three juz. Students submit their memorization daily, with a minimum target of two verses. However, students are encouraged to memorize and submit more than two verses whenever possible. The program does not impose excessive memorization demands because participants are still children and do not reside in a pesantren environment.

Students who successfully complete one juz must undergo an evaluation process through a tasmi' session, which is also broadcast live on YouTube. This evaluation serves as a prerequisite before students may proceed to the next juz. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tahfidz Class continued to operate through online learning, and students were still required to submit a minimum of two memorized verses. Admission to the Tahfidz Program requires a reading fluency assessment, even for students who have already completed the recitation of the Qur'an, since reading proficiency varies among learners.

The memorization targets are structured according to grade level. First-grade students are expected to complete Juz 30, second-grade students Juz 1, third-grade students Juz 2, fourth-grade students Juz 3, fifth-grade students Juz 4, and sixth-grade students Juz 5.

The Tahfidz Class is conducted from Monday to Thursday. The first session, from 07:00 to 07:30, focuses on collective recitation in which students imitate the teacher's reading. The second session, from 07:30 to 09:00, is dedicated to individual memorization submission and additional memorization activities (Binta, 2025). The program is supervised by Ms. Binta and Ms. Firoh, both of whom have completed memorization of the entire Qur'an by heart, although they have not yet obtained formal sanad certification.

The monthly fee for the Tahfidz Program differs only slightly from that of regular classes, with an additional cost of approximately IDR 10,000 per month. Teachers reported that students enrolled in the Tahfidz Program tend to be easier to guide and generally demonstrate faster learning comprehension than students in regular classes. The school does not provide a separate Qur'anic reading and writing program (BTQ) because extending school hours would result in students returning home later in the day. Moreover, the surrounding community already provides numerous Qur'anic learning centers (TPQ), and most students attend these institutions after school. This policy also helps prevent student fatigue and absenteeism from religious learning activities (Nur Lailiyah, 2025).

The Pegon Book Studies component utilizes introductory texts grounded in the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah tradition and adapted to students' levels of understanding. One of the primary learning resources is Mabadiul Fiqhiyyah, which covers various aspects of Islamic jurisprudence. Teachers employ lectures, memorization exercises, sorogan methods, and simple discussions to help students understand the content of the texts effectively.

The introduction of Pegon Book Studies originated from concerns expressed by parents, particularly regarding female students who had entered puberty and needed practical religious knowledge related to menstruation, ritual purification, and other aspects of Islamic law. Initially, the school organized weekly female religious sessions (Keputrian) every Friday from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Over time, many parents proposed the establishment of a more formal Pegon learning program because approximately seventy-five percent of graduates continue their education in pesantren, while others pursue studies in Islamic junior secondary schools and public junior high schools.



Figure 1. Tahfidz Class Program Activities

Pegon learning had existed even before the implementation of the current curriculum. However, the program was temporarily discontinued during curriculum changes and was reintroduced in the current academic year. Previously, Pegon-related materials, including nahwu and shorof, were integrated into Arabic language lessons. Earlier curricula also included formal instruction in Arabic grammar, but these subjects were eventually removed following curriculum reforms.

According to the principal:

"The implementation of Pegon learning takes place once a week, every Tuesday, for one hour from 09:20 to 10:20 a.m. for Grades 4, 5, and 6. Currently, there are ten teachers capable of reading classical Islamic texts. Students in Grades 1 and 2 learn Arabic writing skills known as Tahassyi rather than Pegon studies. The Pegon subject was formally introduced this

year, although kitab learning activities have been conducted for approximately three years.” (Interview with the Principal)

In practice, some students are able to read Pegon texts fluently but do not fully understand their meanings. Consequently, teachers provide continuous guidance and explanations to ensure that students comprehend not only the textual content but also the values embedded within the material. Teachers emphasize interpretation and contextual understanding rather than rote reading alone.

Several supporting factors contribute to the successful implementation of the program. These include teacher training related to Pegon reading methods, strong parental support in motivating students, and students’ familiarity with classical Islamic texts. Such factors facilitate the learning process and strengthen students’ engagement with the program.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain. Most students initially find Pegon script unfamiliar and therefore require substantial adaptation and continuous practice. In addition, limited instructional time restricts opportunities for deeper comprehension and mastery of the material. Religious moderation is integrated throughout the learning process. Teachers actively introduce the concept of *khilafiyah*, emphasizing the existence of legitimate differences of opinion among Islamic scholars. This principle is conveyed both through instructional content and through teachers’ responses during classroom interactions. As a result, students learn to respect differing beliefs and viewpoints while maintaining their own religious commitments.

The impact of the program is evident in the development of students’ character. Students demonstrate greater discipline, healthy critical thinking, and simplicity in their attitudes and behavior. Although one or two students initially participated without possessing the required learning materials, teachers provided additional support to ensure their inclusion. Overall, most students adapted successfully to the learning process. The program has proven effective in establishing a strong foundation of Islamic knowledge while fostering a more moderate and culturally grounded learning environment (Afton Nazil, 2025). The school supports the program by providing dedicated learning spaces, structured schedules, and qualified teachers with expertise in both Qur’anic memorization and classical Islamic studies. The consistent and disciplined implementation of the program has transformed these activities into positive routines for students enrolled in the Excellence Class Program.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The findings indicate that the success of the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies is influenced by several supporting factors. One of the most significant factors is the competence of teachers who possess expertise in both Qur'anic memorization and the study of Pegon texts. Their mastery of the subject matter enables them to guide students effectively and provide meaningful explanations of religious content.

Another important supporting factor is the religious environment cultivated within the school. NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School consistently promotes values such as tolerance, courtesy, mutual respect, and togetherness in daily educational activities. This environment creates a strong foundation for the development of students' religious character and supports the internalization of moderation values.

Parental involvement also plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of the program. Parents actively support their children's memorization activities and encourage them to study religious texts at home. Such support strengthens the continuity of learning beyond the classroom and reinforces the educational values introduced by teachers. In addition, the availability of adequate facilities contributes significantly to program implementation. The school provides dedicated classrooms, learning materials, and relevant Pegon texts, enabling students to participate in learning activities in a conducive educational setting.

Despite these strengths, several challenges were identified during the implementation process. One of the primary obstacles is the variation in students' abilities, particularly in reading Pegon script and memorizing Qur'anic verses. Differences in prior knowledge and learning pace require teachers to provide differentiated instruction and additional support for students who experience difficulties. Limited instructional time also presents a challenge. Since students must participate in the regular school curriculum alongside the Excellence Class Program, opportunities for extended learning and reinforcement are restricted. As a result, teachers must carefully manage instructional time to ensure that learning objectives are achieved without overburdening students.

Another challenge concerns the level of assistance available at home. Some parents are unfamiliar with Pegon script or lack sufficient time to supervise their children's learning activities. Consequently, several students receive limited academic support outside school, which may affect their progress in mastering the learning materials.

Efforts to Foster Religious Moderation

The Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies Program is designed not only to develop students' cognitive and religious competencies but also to cultivate moderate religious attitudes and character. Religious moderation values are integrated into both instructional content and daily educational practices. Teachers consistently emphasize the importance of balance, tolerance, mutual respect, and avoiding extreme attitudes when explaining religious concepts. Students are encouraged to understand Islamic teachings comprehensively and to appreciate diversity within the Muslim community. This approach helps them develop a balanced perspective on religious issues and social interactions.

Inclusive attitudes are fostered through routine practices and daily interactions. Students are encouraged to greet one another respectfully, collaborate in learning activities, assist classmates when needed, and respect differing opinions. These practices help create a school culture characterized by cooperation, empathy, and social harmony.

The selection of learning materials also contributes significantly to the cultivation of religious moderation. The Pegon texts studied by students contain teachings related to morality, ethical behavior, and *tasamuh* (tolerance). Through these materials, students are introduced to Islam as a religion that promotes peace, compassion, and respect for others. Teacher role modeling constitutes another essential component of the program. Teachers demonstrate patience, politeness, humility, and openness toward differences in their daily interactions with students. By observing these behaviors, students gain practical examples of how moderation values can be implemented in real-life situations. Consequently, religious moderation is not merely taught as a theoretical concept but is continuously practiced within the educational environment. Through these various efforts, moderation values become embedded in students' daily experiences and gradually develop into enduring aspects of their character and worldview.

The Impact of the Program on Students' Religious Moderation

The findings reveal that the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies has generated significant positive impacts on students' religious moderation. The program has contributed to the development of attitudes and behaviors that reflect tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity. Students demonstrated increased tolerance toward classmates and community members who hold different perspectives. They became more willing to listen to alternative viewpoints and showed greater respect for differences in religious understanding. This development reflects the successful internalization of

moderation values introduced through both classroom instruction and daily school culture.

The program also contributed to the formation of balanced religious understanding. Students displayed a greater ability to approach religious issues without adopting extreme positions and were less susceptible to rigid or radical interpretations of religion. Through exposure to classical Islamic scholarship and discussions of scholarly differences, students learned that diversity of opinion is a natural and valuable aspect of Islamic intellectual tradition.

Respect for diversity likewise increased among participants. Students demonstrated greater appreciation for differences and exhibited behaviors characterized by mutual respect and non-discrimination. These attitudes were evident in their interactions with peers, teachers, and members of the wider community.

Another significant impact involved the strengthening of moral character and courteous behavior. Students became more respectful in their interactions with teachers and peers and demonstrated improved discipline and responsibility in both academic and religious activities. The program further contributed to enhanced social harmony within the school environment. Students worked cooperatively during classroom activities, participated actively in collective learning sessions, and displayed greater discipline in religious practices. These developments indicate that the program supports not only individual religious growth but also the cultivation of positive social relationships.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies Program has been effective in developing both religious commitment and moderate attitudes among students. The program successfully integrates religious literacy, character education, and moderation values, making it a promising model for religious character development in Islamic primary schools. As such, it offers an alternative educational approach for fostering balanced, tolerant, and socially responsible Muslim citizens from an early age (Nur Lailiyah, 2026).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Excellence Class Program in Tahfidz and Pegon Book Studies at NU Ngingas Islamic Primary School contributes significantly to fostering students' religious moderation. The program is implemented systematically through Qur'anic memorization activities and the study of Pegon texts, supported by competent teachers, a religious school environment, parental involvement, and adequate learning facilities. The

findings indicate that the integration of tahfidz and classical Islamic learning facilitates the internalization of key moderation values, including tawasuth (moderation), tawazun (balance), and tasamuh (tolerance). Through continuous guidance, teacher role modeling, and daily religious practices, students develop a more inclusive and balanced understanding of Islam while learning to respect differences and diversity. The program has positively influenced students' attitudes and behaviors, particularly in strengthening tolerance, discipline, courtesy, and openness toward differing perspectives. Despite challenges related to variations in students' abilities, limited instructional time, and uneven parental support, the program remains effective in promoting religious moderation among students.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing discourse on religious moderation in Islamic education by demonstrating that the integration of Qur'anic memorization and classical Islamic text learning can serve as an effective medium for the internalization of moderate religious values at the primary education level. The findings reinforce the argument that religious moderation is not merely developed through cognitive instruction but also through habituation, role modeling, and engagement with Islamic scholarly traditions rooted in Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah perspectives. This study further highlights the relevance of pesantren-based educational traditions in strengthening inclusive and balanced religious understanding among young learners.

This study is limited to a single-case investigation conducted at one Islamic primary school; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all educational contexts. In addition, the study focuses primarily on the perspectives of school stakeholders and observable student behavior within the school environment. Future research is recommended to employ comparative or mixed-method approaches involving multiple schools and broader participant groups. Longitudinal studies are also needed to examine the sustainability of religious moderation attitudes over time and to explore the long-term impact of tahfidz and Pegon-based learning programs on students' religious and social development.

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