



The urgency of aqeedah education and religious moderation for the millennial generation

Author Name(s): Rina Rehayati, Kasmuri Kasmuri, Suhertina Suhertina, Nurhasnawati Nurhasnawati, Sariah Sariah

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The urgency of moral aqeedah education and religious moderation for millennial generation

Rina Rehayati, Kasmuri Kasmuri, Suhertina Suhertina, Nurhasnawati Nurhasnawati, Sariah Sariah^{*)}

Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

As agents of change, millennial must be able to adapt to new situations and overcome challenges with negative effects. Moral education has helped millennial adopt moderate religious values. Therefore, this study examined aqeedah, moral, and religious moderation education of millennial. Data was collected through systematic, transparent, and reproducible literature reviews, which were used to discover, analyze and synthesize varied studies. A connected paper platform facilitated exploring different literature and identifying keyword-related literature. Descriptive analytics were used to analyze and summarize the data. The result showed that moral aqeedah education must be used to teach millennial age strong values, tolerance, and peace to achieve religious moderation. Furthermore, home, school, and community moral education must start with aqeedah to teach them religious moderation.

Keywords:

Moral aqeedah education,
Religious moderation,
Millennial generation,
Moral education

Corresponding Author:

Sariah Sariah,
Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau
Email: sariah@uin-suska.ac.id

Introduction

Millennial, virtual or net generation, is opportune to benefit from the numerous advantages offered by information technology and the internet (Sari, 2019). They have a strong desire for quick and easy access to knowledge, enjoy spending quality time alone, and value living unrestricted lives. However, this ease of access to information through the Internet and technological advancements has its demerits. Some millennial lack critical literacy and self-control, making them vulnerable to harmful content, including radical ideology, sexuality, and deviant conduct, often presented in an alluring and enticing manner (Setyoningsih, 2018). This generation is characterized by flawed ideological inclinations and poor habits. Many of its members are easily duped and fall prey to misleading messages and deviant behaviour (Bastian, Rahmat, Basri, Rajab, & Nurjannah, 2021; Fanindy & Mupida, 2021).

Even though millennial generation appears modern and tech-savvy outwardly, they have potential vulnerabilities and harmful aspects (Fitri & Dewi, 2021; Ridla & Muslimah, 2021). Living in the global era has brought about several difficulties for these individuals in various aspects of life, such as social, economic, political, and cultural spheres, with noticeable lifestyle changes (Asyari & Dewi, 2021; Bastian et al., 2021). In spite of the fact that millennial generation is expected to be the driving force behind national progress, some members exhibit unethical behaviours, namely engaging in sexual deviance, drug abuse, murder, and dishonesty in the workplace. They are also susceptible to being influenced by skewed understandings and extremist ideologies, including terrorism, fundamentalism, radicalism, intolerance, and extreme thinking, which have adverse impacts on their lives (Fanindy & Mupida, 2021; Marufah, Rahmat, & Widana, 2020; Setyoningsih, 2018).

A poll conducted by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) reported that approximately 12 percent of individuals residing in Indonesia are at risk of exposure to extremism (Ulyana & Riyansyah, 2021), with a significant portion of this group belonging to millennial generation. According to the State Intelligence Agency (BIN), young people aged 17 to 24 face the highest risk of being targeted by terrorist organizations that propagate radical ideologies (Ulyana & Riyansyah, 2021; Zulfikar & Aminah, 2020). These groups actively seek to recruit young people for their cause, and social media platforms have evolved into a favorable environment for the growth of radicalism, particularly among millennial (Pakpahan, Salman, Setyobekti, Sumual, & Christi, 2021). Interestingly, members of this group have been found to be involved in radical activities, with certain incidents triggered by the influence of international terrorist networks specifically targeted at the younger generation (Palupi, 2013; Sumara, Humaedi, & Santoso, 2017).

According to a 2020 report by the World Health Organization (WHO) approximately 200,000 murders were committed by individuals between the ages of 12 and 29 yearly (Karayagiz Muslu, Coşkun Cenk, & Sarlak, 2020; Rudnicka et al., 2020). These alarming statistics highlight the high level of violence among millennial. The Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia also reported a concerning trend of dishonesty becoming more ingrained among young people. These issues point to various challenges faced by the younger generation, including growing sentiments of mistrust and animosity towards one another, disrespect for parental figures, educators, and community leaders, as well as the development of aberrant behaviour in children and teenagers. Some examples of globalization are the tendency of young people to embrace other cultures values, increase in pragmatism and hedonism, disregard for established rules, and a decline in adherence to religious teachings. As a result of these behavioural deviations from socially accepted norms and prevailing values, juvenile delinquency is recognized as a significant social problem (Nasution, Badaruddin, & Maas, 2022; T Tikson, Haselman, & Muhammad Yunus, 2014). Several factors contribute to adolescent delinquency, including a lack of self-control, stemming from a limited understanding of religion, as well as influences from family, peers, and society (Lena, 2019; Mannuhung, 2019; Sumara et al., 2017). These combined factors contribute to the challenges faced in addressing and mitigating delinquency among millennial generation.

The numerous instances of irregularities and moral decline recorded in this era raise concern about the lack of religious moderation, which contradicts the purpose of its teachings aimed at fostering a peaceful, harmonious, and tolerant Indonesian society (K. M. Arif, 2021; Arifinsyah, Andy, & Damanik, 2020). Some millennial does not fully comprehend and appropriately implement religious teachings. Addressing this issue requires embracing religious education as a way of life, as it helps to cultivate and promote moderation among the younger generation. The development of mental character is intimately connected to education background of an individual. Education goes beyond imparting knowledge applicable to actual life circumstances, it also involves enhancing the value of human existence through the cultivation and improvement of morality (Sutrisno, 2019; Syafi'i, Umami, Aziz, & Ma'arif, 2022).

Aqeedah moral education is essential for millennial to live in accordance with established religious traditions, emphasizing an understanding of religion, values, and moral (Dahlan, 2016; Islamy, 2021). As generation set to succeed the baby boomers in leading the nation, addressing the needs of this group becomes extremely vital. Education based on the principles of Aqeedah and Akhlak provides comprehensive guidance for both spiritual and physical development in line with Islamic teachings (R. N. Anwar & Muhayati, 2021; Hasanah, Sutra, Admojo, & Saleh, 2022; Indrawan & Alim, 2022). It also equips them with the wisdom to daily uphold and apply Islamic teachings. Following the global era, millennial brought about significant changes in various aspects of society, including social, economic, political, and cultural spheres, with notable shifts in the living condition of people. Despite being expected to be the driving force behind the advancement of the nation, some millennial exhibit behaviours that prioritize expediency over ethics and moral (Febrianto & Shalikhah, 2021; Juwita, 2018). Aqeedah Akhlak education is the key to helping millennial navigate the challenges of this era and find solutions to these issues (S. Anwar, 2018; Syafi'i et al., 2022; M Zainul Umam, 2022). Considering that most millennial undergo critical stages of growth and development through

education, moral awareness is an indispensable strategy for their overall well-being. This study aims to identify and analyze the urgency of aqeedah moral education and religious moderation for millennial generation.

Methods

The present study uses a systematic, explicit and reproducible literature review method to identify, evaluate and synthesize preliminary works (Creswell, 2002; Creswell & Creswell, 2003). The research procedures involves (1) selecting the topics to be reviewed, (2) tracking and selecting suitable or relevant articles, (3) conducting literature analysis and synthesis, and (4) organizing and review the writing process. In order to identify relevant literature, specific criteria are used for selecting data sources. This includes focusing on literature published in the past 10 years, as well as national and international journals in circulation. The identification process is accomplished using keywords such as Aqeedah akhlak education and religious moderation, with the aid of connected paper tools. These visual tools assist in result and exploring relevant papers related to the specified keywords and discussion. The following visual represents some of the literature identified as relevant to the discussion.

Figures 1 and 2 show the Connected Papers display, which produced graphs of various literature based on the entered articles, serving as the main source of the searched keywords. The selection process involves filtering relevant discussions from the numerous literatures obtained. Subsequently, various information is analyzed, synthesized, and organized to produce comprehensive discussions and conclusions (Creswell, 2002).

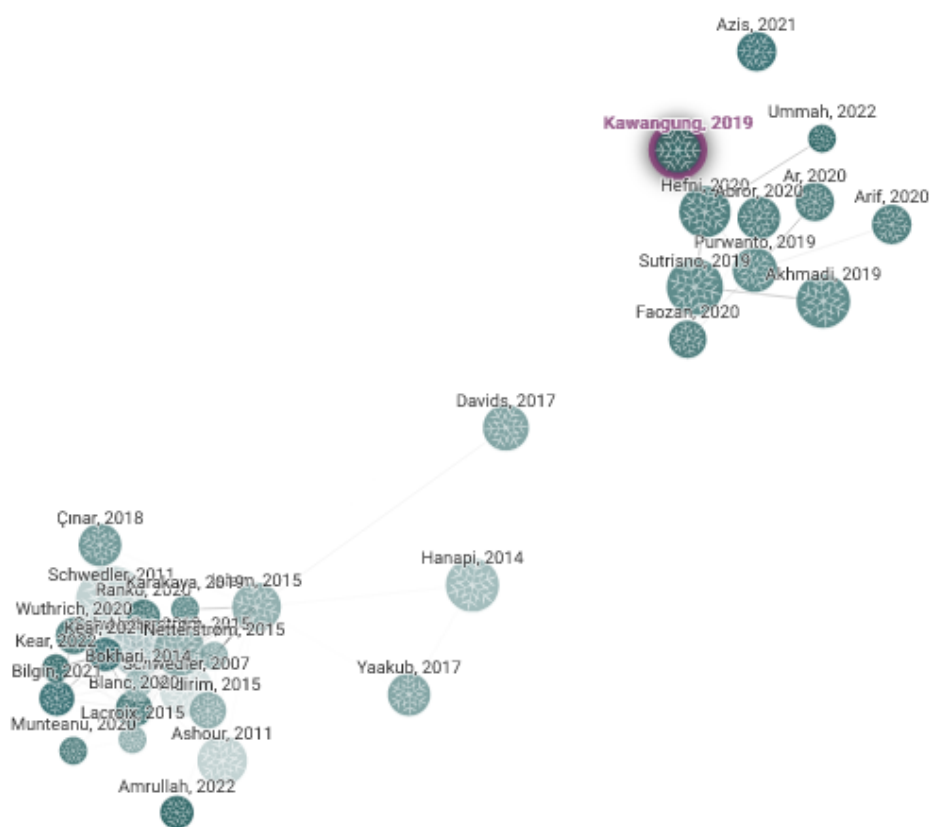


Figure 1. Literature with the keyword Religious Moderation

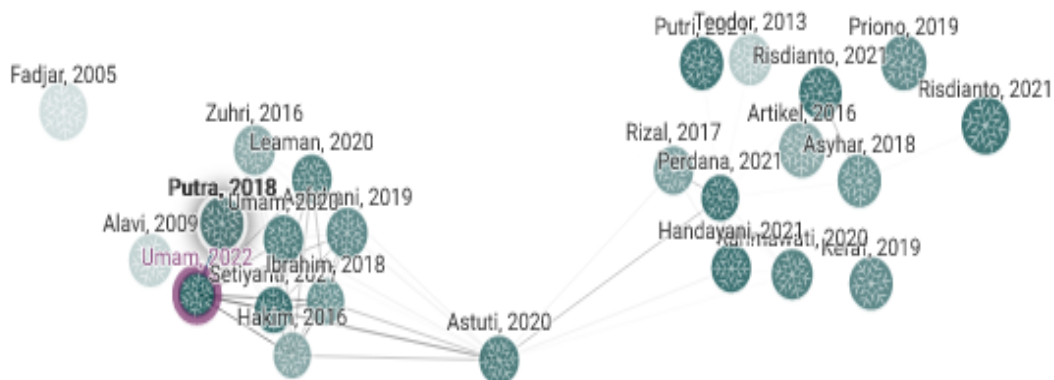


Figure 2. Literature with the keyword Moral Aqedah Education

Results and Discussion

Development and characteristics of millennial generation

Millennial Generation, born between 1980 and 2000, currently dominates the world of work and education, both in Indonesia and abroad (Farrell & Hurt, 2014; Poluakan, Dikayuana, Wibowo, & Raharjo, 2019). In 2020, the individuals in this group were 20 to 40 years old, representing the productive workforce that serves as the backbone of the Indonesian economy. Three years prior to this era (in 2017), the number of millennials had already surpassed other generation. According to the 2017 National Socioeconomic Survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, millennial generation accounted for approximately 88 million people, making up 33.75 percent of the total population of Indonesia. This proportion was significantly greater than previous generation, including Generation X (25.74 percent) and the baby boom + Veteran Generation (11.27 percent). Furthermore, Generation Z individuals reached approximately 29.23 percent (Statistik, 2017).

The data earlier presented shows the dominance of millennial generation in the current era, commonly known as Generation Y. This tech-savvy generation heavily relies on instant and fast-paced communication technologies, such as emails and chats, as they grew up in the era when the internet started to boom. The rapid technological advancement and globalization in the 21st century have significantly reshaped the way modern humans live. Conventional lifestyles have led to modernization, which has positively contributed to scientific progress and the advancement of civilization, while ignoring on moral development (Farrell & Hurt, 2014; Monaco & Martin, 2007). Millennial era is marked by a shift from traditional living to new, influential lifestyles driven by technology and globalization. This dynamic interplay between technology and modern lifestyle significantly influences moral development of adolescents in this generation.

The modernization style of millennial generation has brought about several negative impacts. According to the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia, millennial is highly vulnerable to hoaxes and fake news due to the fast-paced development of globalization, which has created an environment where misinformation easily spreads. The National Narcotics Agency (BNN) has identified this group as being at risk of drug abuse, particularly with narcotics, psychotropics and illegal substances. The ease of access to drugs in the current globalized world has made millennial susceptible to exploitation by dealers, who even involve children in drug trafficking. This dangerous trend could lead to addiction and long-term consequences for those who initially experiment with these substances. The State Intelligence Agency (BIN) reported that approximately 85 percent of millennial are vulnerable to radicalism. This susceptibility has led to deviations in behaviour, including engaging in illegal activities such as free sex, crime, and disregard for established regulations.

The social changes brought about by globalization and advancements in human science are undeniable. However, it is essential to recognize that this globalized culture has the potential to overshadow indigenous customs. Many of these changes are influenced by factors that directly impact humans, with technology perceived as a significant driver of transformation. Millennial generation, characterized by their dominant use of the internet, exemplifies the impact of technology on society. They possess distinctive traits such as social awareness, technological reliance, ethical spending preferences, a strong education background, health consciousness, financial prudence and heightened spiritual awareness (Sul-toni, Gunawan, & Argadinata, 2020).

This group of individuals, born in the era of globalization, possesses distinct advantages in mastering and adapting to technology compared to previous generation. They are constantly exposed to a rapid flow of information, granting members of this group easy access to knowledge and fostering an open mindset towards learning (Amaliya, Komalasari, & Asbari, 2022). However, the abundance of information also presents challenges because millennial need to develop strong critical thinking skills to discern which is accurate and reliable. The internet and social media provide this generation with unparalleled access to information, contributing to a creative and knowledge-enriching environment. They must also be cautious, as these technological tools have the potential to lead to moral and spiritual decadence (Huda, Tadjuddin, Sholihuddin, Kato, & Cengiz, 2023; Permatasari & Hanita, 2021). Striking a balance between using technology responsibly and being mindful of its potential negative effects is crucial for millennial generation to thrive in the digital age.

Millennial generation has the potential to address demographic challenges and contribute to national independence, provided they are aware of their capabilities (Karyono, Sabowo, & Hartati, 2022). The role of the government in implementing multiple policies and regulations to improve the quality of human resources and youth is crucial in empowering this generation to face certain challenges effectively. Interestingly, collaboration among all stakeholders is essential for achieving shared goals. Indonesians should be optimistic when considering the various potentials, millennial generation possesses. Their talents and capabilities significantly contribute to realizing national independence across all aspects. Education plays a pivotal role in the growth and development of millennial generation (Amaliya et al., 2022), serving as a key vehicle to nurture their potential.

Religious moderation

As social beings, humans have a natural inclination to communicate and interact with others to satisfy their needs and desires. In society, individuals inevitably encounter diverse groups, including those with varying religious backgrounds. It is undeniable that tensions and conflicts can arise during these social interactions, regardless of race or religion (Arifinsyah et al., 2020; Azis, Saihu, Hsb, & Islamy, 2021). Throughout human existence, clashes and frictions occur due to differences in beliefs, values, and cultural practices.

In order to maintain the integrity and cohesion of the society, as well as prevent conflicts, mutual regard and respect are essential. Therefore, it is vital to establish and maintain the ideals of religious moderation (K. M. Arif, 2021; Fanindy & Mupida, 2021). Religious moderation entails a balanced and tolerant method to understanding and practising religious teachings, avoiding extreme interpretations (either a rigid or liberal understanding) on both ends of the spectrum. Indicators of religious moderation include being tawasuth (moderate), tasamuh (tolerant), tawazun (balanced), and tidal (consistent, firm and fair) in one's belief. In Indonesia, it is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and serves as a fundamental concept for religious education (Abdullah, 2019; K. M. Arif, 2021). Education efforts aimed at promoting religious moderation play a critical role in shaping the character of millennial generation and fostering a love for peace.

Indonesia is a plural nation characterized by its rich diversity of races, cultures, ethnicities and religions. By embracing these differences, the nation seeks for ways to coexist harmoniously, thereby promoting tolerance among its people. The noble values of living together in peace and harmony are deeply enshrined in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, serving as guiding principles (Azis et al., 2021; Dahlan, 2016). Religious moderation aligns with the national education system, as contained in Law No. 2 of 2003. This education method is rooted in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, which

is based on religious values and Indonesian national culture as well as responsive to the demands of changing times (Arifinsyah et al., 2020; Azis et al., 2021).

Various phenomena and dynamics of modern Islam have captured the attention of observers, specifically intellectuals who seek to understand the complexities of terrorism, fundamentalism, radicalism and intolerance in the context of religion (Ritonga, 2021; Setyoningsih, 2018). These subjects consistently fuel engaging discussions in media coverage and academic settings. The ongoing discourse surrounding these phenomena highlights their unique and intricate nature, leading to the emergence of theorists from diverse backgrounds. In Indonesia, the persistence of intolerance serves as concrete evidence of the urgent need to enhance the understanding and appreciation of Islamic values that promote moderation. As a result, multiple methods are being pursued to address this issue, focusing on Islamic moderation education programs. In order to ensure the effectiveness of such programs, there is a need to pay attention to curriculum factors, recruitment of educators, and appropriate learning strategies (Jubba, Awang, & Sungkilang, 2021).

In a pluralistic community, inclusive and moderate Islamic education is the most effective tool for preventing bigotry, deradicalization, and conflict (Hasanah et al., 2022). By focusing on moderation, Islamic education institutions tend to shape the mindset of all Muslims, encouraging these individuals to embrace religious diversity and respect the beliefs held by others (Kawangung, 2019). However, Indonesia faces significant challenges due to its diverse conditions, encompassing numerous ethnicities, races, groups, civilizations, and religions. The influence of Western liberalism poses a threat to the culture and moral of the East, resulting in the emergence of an unrestricted and ungoverned form of Islam (Hasanah et al., 2022; Jubba et al., 2021). In order to counter extremism and violence, specifically among the youth, the Wasathiyah concept needs to be adopted. This concept provides methods to combat extreme beliefs, which involve adopting its ideals (Fanindy & Mupida, 2021). Embracing the wasathiyah mindset equips the younger generation to navigate new knowledge with wisdom and tolerance.

The urgency moral aqeedah education

Character education emphasizes the development of a noble reputation, thereby making the formation of moral a critical aspect, particularly in shaping children. In order to achieve this, well-designed and consistently implemented education and coaching facilities are needed. Continuous assessment and improvement of education process are envisaged to nurture exceptional students. The increasing recognition of the significance of character, and Aqeedah moral education, reflects efforts to enhance the overall quality of education (Muhamad Zainul Umam, 2020; Zamroni, 2017).

Aqeedah is derived from the Arabic word *aqada*-*ya'qidu*-*aqdan*, which means to remember, believe, bond or faith. Consequently, *akhlaq*, derived from the Arabic term *akhlaq*, refers to temperament, character, and religion. Morality is defined as manners, character, and behaviour (Nata, 2018; Muhamad Zainul Umam, 2020). Aqeedah Akhlak combines these two aspects, representing the fundamental principles of belief in Islamic teachings concerning the attitude or behavior of a Muslim in anticipation of the blessings of God. Moral Education comprises two components, namely Education and Moral, its goal is to help students acquire religious, spiritual power, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and essential skills for oneself, society, nation, and state (Mustofa, Nurita, Al Mutamaddinah, & Ichsan, 2022; Rohmah & Badriyah, 2022).

The term Aqeedah plays a critical function in educating children, encompassing a vast range of aspects that are essential for their development. Individuals with noble principles, guided by a strong aqeedah, tend to be highly competent. The teachings of Islamic Aqeedah emphasize avoiding immoral behaviour, contributing to the establishment of excellent moral based on the guidance of the Qur'an and hadith (Ismail, 2014; Waluyo, 2018). Aqeedah, morality, and noble character are a reflection of personality, in addition to being capable of elevating individuals to a high level of dignity. In the discourse of Islamic education, moral education holds immense importance. The importance of faith and moral, particularly for Muslims, cannot be overstated, as these attributes guide life goals. The possession of strong values and religious beliefs leads to inner peace, both physically and mentally,

while the reverse results in moral crisis. Moral are significant in spiritual enlightenment and self-actualization (Rohmah & Badriyah, 2022).

Millennial generation's fighting spirit, which seeks to embrace spirituality and morality, must be grounded in strong religious faith and moral values. The results on moral principles include a lack of belief and fellowship with Allah. Meanwhile, results related to beliefs include innumerable cases of immorality and moral damage (Mustofa et al., 2022). It was reported that learning Aqeedah morality plays a critical role in shaping the character of students and fostering individuals with noble traits. The millenniums are at a critical phase where continuous guidance based on high moral ideals is necessary to nurture them as the next generation of individuals with noble character (Fikri, 2019; Zakariyah, Fauziyah, & Kholis, 2022).

Preliminary study reported that implementing learning Aqeedah moral has a significant and successful impact on fostering student moral. They learn to embrace moral towards themselves, their parents, peers, and the larger community, which applies to daily life (Dalimunthe, 2019). In education context, specifically within schools, implementing religious character development is crucial for transforming the behaviour of students who lack decency and morality. Schools play a vital role in nurturing religious character, fostering individuals who are peace-loving, tolerant, and truthful (M Zainul Umam, 2022).

Implementation of moral aqeedah education in realizing religious moderation for millennial generation

Education is recognized as a highly effective means of enhancing the intelligence and character of youngsters for the better. As a result, continuous efforts are made to construct and improve the process to produce the desired generation (Nata, 2018; Rohmah & Badriyah, 2022). The plan to ensure that this group of individuals is unaffected by negative influences requires encouragement and inspiration guided by character education. However, character education has not been entirely successful in creating a character-filled Indonesia (Kawangung, 2019; Sutrisno, 2019). Moral, cultural values, and way of life can be negatively affected, assuming education focuses solely on intellectual development without nurturing student character. Aqeedah moral education is essential for shaping moral and values of the younger generation (Arrodhi, 2021; Zakariyah et al., 2022).

Moral aqeedah education is an integral component of Islamic Religious Education, aimed at preparing students to comprehend, respect, and adhere to Islamic law. It serves as the foundation for their way of life, achieved through guidance, instruction, and practical experiences. It is one of the disciplines at the Akidah Akhlak School that encourages students to practice admirable behaviour in addition to studying theoretical teachings (M. Arif, 2022; Hafiz, 2022). Religious education adopted an integrative and comprehensive method, encompassing multiple interrelated material aspects. Adopting a moderate style of education for millennial aims to sustain the fundamentals of religion and reduce religious-based conflicts and violence. Aqeedah moral education fosters accurate comprehension and promotes tolerance (Karyono et al., 2022; Ritonga, 2021).

Moral aqeedah education is internalized based on the values contained in the Quran, making it particularly significant for millennial generation seeking a deeper understanding of the Al-Quran, its verses, and meanings (Ritonga, 2021). The Quran holds extraordinary characteristics, serving as a remedy for various dangers. It is perceived as the solution to the challenges encountered by humans and continues to inspire humanity till the end of time. The Quran remains a fundamental aspect of religious moderation education in Indonesia (Jubba, Pabbajah, Abdullah, & Juhansar, 2022; M Zainul Umam, 2022).

This type of education aims to mould millennial into individuals with high moral standards by instilling dedication and guidance (Zakariyah et al., 2022). The concept of internalizing the values of Al-Qur'anic-based religious moderation revolves around four facets of the wasathiyah concept, namely the message of justice, moderation, being the best people, and having comprehensive scientific knowledge. Given the rapid influence of liberalization and extremism in the name of religion, this concept is relevant in religious education for millennial. By internalizing the ideas of

moderation inherent in the Qur'an, it is anticipated that generation of religious tolerant communities can be nurtured, where differences are perceived as a gift from God to its adherents (Ritonga, 2021; Muhamad Zainul Umam, 2020; M Zainul Umam, 2022).

The pattern of imparting moral ideals in millennial was illustrated by promoting positive thoughts, sentiments, and motivation. This involves training oneself to constantly think positively, focusing on positive outcomes, and avoiding negative assumptions and thoughts. Instead of negativity, individuals are encouraged to embrace goodness (Muhamad Zainul Umam, 2020). In addition to positive thoughts, fostering positive emotions is essential. This is achieved by cultivating gratitude in all circumstances, accepting reality, and maintaining the belief that challenges can lead to blessings. Emphasizing the importance of reading the Qur'an and focusing on worshipping Allah also contributes to nurturing positive sentiments. Inculcating positive behaviours aligned with piety and embodying positive energy is crucial in ensuring millennial generation finds contentment and lives a fulfilled life (S. Anwar, 2018; Indrawan & Alim, 2022).

In order to ensure that members of this group experiences pleasure and tranquillity in their present and future lives, they must internalize moral ideals of Aqeedah through moral education. Adopting a moderate Islamic education method can effectively counter extreme behaviors and ideas among students, enabling future graduates to embrace religious diversity with tolerance and respect other people's perspectives (Zakariyah et al., 2022). Implementing character education as a long-term solution demands collective attention. It should be carried out consciously, with proper planning, systematic execution, monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up in education institutions. This method aligns with national education goals, fostering skills and shaping dignified characters and civilization in the context of educating this generation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, moral education played a critical role in the realization of religious and socially harmonious life. Millennial generation had the potential to be a positive force for change because it encouraged the transformation of the world and education. Through the effectiveness, improvement, and development of religion-based and moral aqeedah education, the values of religious moderation in this generation were realized, which led to the promotion of peace, tolerance, and virtue. Amid the rapid influence of liberalization and extremism in the name of religion, Aqeedah akhlak education for millennial inculcated the ideals of religious moderation. Furthermore, through internalized concepts of moderation inherent in the Qur'an, generation of religious community was fostered that embraced religious diversity and viewed differences as a divine gift from God. This education must be implemented in the family, school, and community settings, as well as in a broader context.

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