



# Building a Moderate Generation through Mujadalah Bil-Lati Hiya Ahsan in Family Education and the Internalization of Islamic Economic Values

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine strategies for building a moderate generation through the mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan approach in family education, as well as integrating Islamic economic values in Garut Regency. Amid the rise of ideological deviations and the weakening of communal values, the family serves as the primary foundation in shaping a child's character to be tolerant, fair, and responsible. The mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan approach, which emphasizes respectful, wise, and appreciative dialogue, is believed to effectively instill values of moderation from an early age. Islamic economic values such as honesty, justice, cooperation, and social concern are also internalized through daily interaction and parental example, thus supporting the formation of a generation that is not only spiritually moderate but also economically ethical. This study employs a qualitative approach with field research conducted in several districts of Garut Regency. The findings indicate that the synergy between ethical communication and the internalization of Islamic economic values within the family significantly contributes to nurturing a generation that is moderate, tolerant, and competitive.

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## INTRODUCTION

Amid the surge of information and the complexity of religious and social life, Indonesia still faces significant challenges in maintaining harmony within its diversity. The values of religious moderation, which should serve as the foundation for communal life, are often displaced by extreme narratives, both from religious interpretations and ideological perspectives. (Mubarok, A. R., & Sunarto, 2024) Various deviant religious ideologies have spread easily through religious study groups, social media, and even subtly permeate everyday conversations that may appear ordinary. (Hefni, 2022)

This phenomenon of religious deviation is not merely fictional. A real case occurred in Garut Regency in 2021, where several residents were reportedly recruited through religious study groups into the Indonesian Islamic State (NII) organization. The doctrine they received was not just a difference of opinion, but one that denied the existence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) and promoted propaganda claiming that the Indonesian state ideology contradicts Islamic values. This incident has opened the eyes of many to the challenges of religious moderation, which are present not only in urban areas or on social media, but also deeply rooted in rural communities. (Kemenag, 2021a)

Addressing the flow of ideologies that contradict the values of moderation certainly requires substantial effort. Both the community and the government share a strong commitment to realizing

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a moderate society. However, just as a building cannot stand firm without a solid foundation, a moderate generation cannot emerge without the early instillation of moderation values. (Wati, F. S., Labibah, A. A., & Indrawati, 2024) Formal education is indeed important; however, the instillation of noble values will be far more effective if first introduced within the small unit called the family. (Hasani, 2023).

The family is the first place where a child learns about love, respect for differences, and the basics of religion—reflected through the words and actions of their parents. Therefore, instilling the values of moderation within the family environment is a vital necessity that cannot be postpone (Hasibuan, 2023) In line with this, instilling the value of moderation is not sufficient through advice alone; it requires a dialogical space where children feel heard and respected, not merely instructed. In this context, the principle of *mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan* becomes highly relevant when applied within family communication. (Fatmawati., 2023)

*Mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan* is a teaching derived from the Qur'an regarding the ethics of dialogue in the best, gentlest, wisest way, while respecting the conversation partner. When this principle is implemented in communication between parents and children, it creates a family that is not only a safe haven but also a space for children to learn wholesome values. (Salmadanis., 2021) In a broader context, the family also serves as the most effective place for internalizing Islamic economic values, such as honesty in *muamalah*, responsibility, justice, and concern for others. These values not only nurture children to become spiritually moderate individuals but also encourage the formation of an ethical and civilized economic character.

Based on this reasoning, this study will comprehensively examine the application of the principle of *mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan* in family education, which can serve as a pathway to shaping a moderate generation from an early age, particularly in Garut Regency. This effort is not only aimed at addressing various issues of religious moderation but also serves as a preventive measure in building a peaceful, tolerant society with a strong awareness of both spiritual and Islamic economic values in daily life.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of building a moderate generation through the *mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan* approach in family education and the internalization of Islamic economic values in Garut Regency. The research sites are focused on several sub-districts that represent rural and semi-urban community characteristics, with diverse religious and social backgrounds.

Data collection techniques include participatory observation, in-depth interviews with parents, religious leaders, and educators, as well as documentation studies of family activities and Islamic educational materials. Informants were selected purposively those known to apply dialogic communication principles within the family and show a concern for character education and Islamic economics. (Syaripudin, 2018)

Data analysis was conducted thematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was strengthened through source and technique triangulation, as well as peer discussions. This approach aims to uncover real practices in the field that can serve as models for fostering a generation that is moderate, tolerant, and oriented toward Islamic values in social and economic life. (Iip Syaripudin, 2018)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Internalizing Moderation Values from an Early Age

Moderation is also known by the terms *wasath* or *wasathiyah*, which means balance or fairness, and *tawazun*, which refers to equilibrium. The term moderation is also commonly defined as self-control, avoiding both excessiveness and deficiency. (Abdillah, A., & Krisna Jaya, 2024)

The internalization of religious moderation values from an early age is a strategic effort that not only shapes individual character but also determines the direction of religious life on a larger scale. In this context, the internalization of religious moderation values aims to cultivate a firm and confident belief in one's own religion while prioritizing respect for others of different faiths, with the

hope of forming a generation that is courteous in practicing their religion. (Nur Wasilah, F., Mukti, A., & Hamzah, 2023)

According to Fauzi, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia emphasizes that religious moderation means an attitude of acceptance towards diversity. Furthermore, the Special Staff of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Nuruzzaman, explained that religious moderation is not about moderating religion itself, but rather moderating an individual's understanding and experience in practicing their faith. At least four indicators of religious moderation exist: commitment to nationalism, anti-violence, tolerance, and acceptance of traditions. (Kemenag, 2021b)

The four indicators of religious moderation, when viewed through the lens of internalizing moderation values in children, can be outlined as follows: First, commitment to nationalism and love for the country. Children need to understand that loving their religion does not have to be in conflict with loving Indonesia. They need to be taught that maintaining harmony in religious life is equivalent to preserving the unity and integrity of the nation.. (Masliyana, 2023)

Second, love for peace and anti-violence. Children need to be introduced to peaceful attitudes in problem-solving, both in small spaces like playing with friends and in broader social dynamics. This will help children develop sensitivity to forms of violence, both verbal and physical, and encourage them to seek peaceful ways to resolve conflicts. (Masliyana, 2023)

Third, tolerance. Moderation emphasizes the principle of justice while still respecting others, avoiding excessiveness in understanding or explaining religious teachings, and steering clear of extreme attitudes. This attitude of tolerance will shape children into individuals who are open-minded, not quick to judge, and capable of creating a healthier social climate (Masliyana, 2023).

Fourth, acceptance of tradition. Children need to be introduced to the reality that differences are a natural part of life in a multicultural society. They need to learn that others may have different ways of thinking, worshiping, and expressing their beliefs, and that this does not make one person better or worse than another. (Nur Wasilah, F., Mukti, A., & Hamzah, 2023)

The urgency of internalizing these moderation values lies in its function as the foundation of a child's character, which will continue to develop into adulthood. A child who is accustomed to moderate behavior from an early age will grow into an individual who can accept differences and bridge the gap between two groups with differing views. This process of internalization needs to be carried out consistently, comprehensively, and in accordance with the child's development. (Yuliana, Lusiana, F., Ramadhanyaty, D., Rahmawati, A., & Nurul Anwar, 2022)

It is important to understand that internalization will not be completed overnight. This is a long process that will be carried out through repetition, exemplary behavior, and habituation. However, it should be emphasized that children are not only the successors of future generations, but also play a role as the guardians of harmony, which is being shaped today.

### **The Role of the Family in Building a Moderate Generation in Garut Regency**

Before a child encounters community life, peers, or even the virtual world, the child first engages with the closest world to them, which is the family. Everything that the child knows starts from the family, from the first words they hear, the values they absorb, to the perspectives that gradually shape their character. (Fitriyani, Hayaturrohmah, & Latief, 2024)

The definition of family goes beyond being just a physical shelter; it serves as the first pillar in shaping a child's identity, including instilling moderate religious attitudes. In the religious context, the family is the first space where a child comes to know God, learns religious teachings, and understands spiritual values. This is where the role of the family becomes crucial in shaping a child's religious reasoning that is meaningful and not merely ritualistic. (Yuliana, Lusiana, F., Ramadhanyaty, D., Rahmawati, A., & Nurul Anwar, 2022)

Considering the importance of preparing a moderate generation, Garut Regency stands out as one of the regions with potential to realize this goal. This is based on data released by the Central Statistics Agency of Garut Regency regarding the Population by Age Group and Gender in 2023, which shows that there are 130,355 children and 470,222 teenagers in the region.. (BPS, 2024) This large number indicates that the potential for building a moderate character in Garut Regency is greatly influenced by parenting patterns and the value-based education starting from the family environment. In addition, data also reveals the religious diversity in Garut Regency.

With the majority of the population being Muslim, totaling 2,733,854 people, there are also followers of other religions, including 2,976 Protestants, 1,752 Catholics, 506 Hindus, 361 Buddhists, and 223 Confucians. (BPS, 2024) This diversity is a true reflection that religious life in Kabupaten Garut takes place amidst variety, thus requiring early education that instills values of tolerance, empathy, and respectful dialogue.

In a moderate family, values such as tolerance, appreciating differences, and a fair attitude in thinking and acting can be introduced through everyday conversations, religious stories that foster love, and parental role models. Parents who are open to listening to their children's opinions, engage in dialogue without intimidation, and provide space for children to ask questions and express themselves, are laying the foundation for the development of moderate character in their children.. (Erviana, Y., 2024)

More than just that, the family also serves as the front line in shielding children from the influence of extreme ideologies and distorted religious understandings that deviate from Islamic teachings. Especially now, with gadgets and social media being so close to children's lives, families are expected to actively participate in guiding and mentoring their children (Fatmawati, 2023). Children who are left to learn religion in a one-sided manner, primarily from the digital world, are more susceptible to absorbing misleading narratives-narratives that are often presented convincingly but are filled with intolerance and hatred. (Nur Azizah, 2023)

The role of the family in this context is not just about providing religious education verbally, but also about creating a healthy communication space, encouraging deep discussions filled with love, and fostering empathy in children towards others. In light of this, the process requires awareness and consistency from parents in educating their children, not merely to make them ritualistically obedient, but to nurture them into wise, tolerant individuals who can engage in peaceful dialogue (Hasani, 2023). By making the family the main pillar in shaping a child's moderate attitude, what is being built is not only a strong individual foundation spiritually and socially, but also a future for the nation.

### **The Principle of Mujadalah Bil-Lati Hiya Ahsan in Family Communication and Its Relevance to the Internalization of Islamic Economic Values**

The principle of mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan is a guideline from the Qur'an for establishing polite, wise, and respectful communication amidst differences. In the context of family, this principle not only encourages the creation of a dialogical atmosphere between parents and children but also serves as an effective means of transferring Islamic values in their entirety, including the values of Islamic economics. Good communication becomes the key to shaping a child's mindset and character, especially in understanding the concepts of honesty, responsibility, and justice, which are at the core of Islamic economic ethics.

When parents apply mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan, values such as amanah (trustworthiness), 'adalah (justice), and ta'awun (cooperation) can be conveyed naturally in daily conversations. For instance, parents can instill the value of honesty in transactions, the importance of keeping promises in deals, and the spirit of sharing through the practices of charity (sedekah) and almsgiving (infak). With gentle and rational communication, children not only accept these values as rules but also understand them as part of personal integrity and acts of worship.

Thus, the application of the principle of mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan in family communication not only serves as a tool for developing a moderate character but also becomes a medium for the internalization of Islamic economic values. This strengthens the spiritual and social foundation of the child to become a just, productive individual who cares about maintaining the balance between the worldly and the spiritual aspects of life in society.

In essence, communication within the family framework is a bridge that connects the hearts of family members. In the context of family education, communication serves as the main foundation for the development of a child's character, including fostering a moderate religious awareness. (Al Hariri, M. A., Ma'ruf, M. A., & Huda, 2024)

One of the Islamic communication principles that is relevant to be applied in family education is mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan. Mujadalah is defined as munaqasyah or khashamah, which is a method of discussion where differing opinions are expressed in a rational manner. (Sya'bi., 2022) his communication principle is sourced from the Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl, verse 125:



أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۚ وَجِدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

*“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and argue with them in a way that is best.”.*  
(Tim Departemen Agama RI, 2010)

In the Tafsir of Ibn Kathir, it is explained that this verse is a direct command to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to invite people to the path of Allah through three main approaches. First, Hikmah (wisdom). The word hikmah is understood as dawah with strong evidence and rational argumentation, aimed at those who are intellectually prepared to accept the truth. Second, mau'izhah hasanah (good advice), which refers to delivering advice through an emotional approach that touches the heart, communicated with gentleness and compassion. Third, mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan (debate in the best manner). This is defined as a form of dialogue that is respectful, does not belittle the interlocutor, and prioritizes good character in conveying the truth. (Al-Sheikh, 2004)

In line with this, Prof. Dr. M. Quraish Shihab in his Tafsir Al-Mishbah also emphasizes the importance of context in dawah. He interprets mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan as an open dialogue aimed at seeking the truth, rather than winning an argument. By using this approach, Islamic dialogue becomes not only an effort to convey religious messages but also a medium for fostering awareness and appreciation of humanity. (Shihab, 2005)

The explanation from both of the above commentators shows that dialogue is not merely about delivering a message, but also an art of understanding, embracing, and embodying divine values in human life. Although this verse directly discusses the method of dialogue in dawah, its principles are highly relevant when implemented in family education.

In the context of family communication, mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan can be fostered through several concrete strategies. First, by creating a safe and open-minded communication space. Parents need to position themselves as active listeners, listening not to respond, but to understand. A child who feels their argument is valued will be more open to dialogue and more receptive to constructive criticism and advice. (Sya'bi., 2022)

Second, using gentle and loving language in conveying religious values. Even if it takes the form of a reprimand, if delivered in a polite manner, it will be more easily accepted than a harsh tone that causes pain. (Sya'bi., 2022)

Third, providing space for questions and answers about religious matters. A child who is accustomed to discussing religious values with their parents will grow with critical thinking skills, while still maintaining respect. This strategy serves as a means of strengthening moderate religious reasoning, which is neither rigid nor blind. (Sya'bi., 2022)

The principle of mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan offers a solution to avoid harsh and repressive communication patterns, which can lead to psychological rebellion and, in some cases, end up with individuals seeking religious meaning in the wrong places. The application of mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan in family communication reflects love, wisdom, and the hope that a child will grow into a faithful individual full of wisdom. Thus, mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan should not only be a foundation for dawah outside the home, but it can also serve as the heartbeat of life within the home.

## CONCLUSION

Indonesia's diversity is a blessing from Allah, as a testament to His power, bringing together various ethnicities, cultures, races, and religions in one country. However, like a double-edged sword, this diversity also has the potential to spark conflicts and divisions between religious communities. When tolerance weakens and deviant religious interpretations are allowed to spread, as seen in the case of NII recruitment through study groups in Garut Regency in 2021, it serves as an important alarm for society about the urgency of instilling the values of religious moderation from an early age.

Values such as tolerance, anti-violence, openness to differences, and love for the homeland must become an integral part of efforts to create a moderate generation. In this process, the family plays a central role as the first place where children learn to practice religion wisely and in balance. One relevant approach is the application of the principle of mujadalah bil-lati hiya ahsan, which means engaging in dialogue in the best way, as taught in QS. An-Nahl: 125. Communication filled with gentleness, wisdom, and love becomes a bridge to instill religious values without coercion.

Furthermore, this ethical communication principle also serves as a strategic medium for internalizing Islamic economic values within the family, such as honesty in transactions, responsibility

in the use of wealth, fairness in distribution, and the spirit of sharing and social care. When these values are instilled from an early age through role modeling and healthy dialogue, the family not only shapes a spiritually moderate generation but also one that is ethically grounded in economics—ready to contribute to a plural and dynamic society.

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