

Research Article

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Integration of Religious Moderation in Social Studies Education for Strengthening Disaster Resilience and Sustainable Economic Development in Vulnerable Communities

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Abstract

Background/purpose. Social Studies education holds a strategic role in fostering social, cultural, and religious values that are contextually aligned with societal challenges. In Semarang City, vulnerable communities face a dual threat of recurrent flooding and socio-economic disparities, which hinder educational processes and sustainable livelihoods. This study aims to examine how the values of religious moderation can be integrated into Social Studies learning to enhance disaster literacy while simultaneously promoting community-based sustainable economic development.

Materials/methods. This study adopts a qualitative approach using a phenomenological design based on Creswell's framework. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis focusing on flood-affected vulnerable communities in Semarang City. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the underlying meanings and connections between religious moderation practices and community responses to disasters, as well as the dynamics of local economic development.

Results. The findings reveal that the values of religious moderation, namely tolerance, solidarity, and interfaith collaboration, serve as an effective foundation for Social Studies education in fostering social awareness, strengthening community cohesion, and enhancing disaster preparedness. The integration of these values into Social Studies learning further contributes to the development of more inclusive and sustainable community-based economic networks.

Conclusion. The integration of religious moderation into Social Studies education functions not merely as a normative discourse but as a transformative strategy in social education. It strengthens students' disaster literacy, fosters social participation, and facilitates resilient economic development within vulnerable communities.

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1. Introduction

Semarang City is one of Indonesia's metropolitan areas that is geographically and ecologically highly vulnerable to flooding (Fajrin et al., 2016; Mulianingsih, 2017; Neise et al., 2021; Permanahadi & Widowati, 2022). This threat is not only cyclical but has intensified in recent years due to climate change, environmental degradation, and large-scale land-use conversion (Barua et al., 2017; Castells-Quintana et al., 2018; Fernández Lopera et al., 2022; Mitchell et al., 2006; Sakellari, 2015; Skouloudis et al., 2023). The most severe impacts are felt by marginalized communities residing along riverbanks, coastal zones, and densely populated urban settlements areas that are structurally underserved in terms of spatial planning and disaster protection. According to data from the Semarang City Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) in 2023, at least 30 major flood events occurred over the past three years, affecting more than 15,000 households annually. These floods not only damage housing infrastructure but also disrupt livelihoods, children's education, and access to essential services (Ferani Mulianingsih, 2022; Mulianingsih et al., 2025; Purnomo et al., 2022; Purnomo & Mulianingsih, 2021). Unfortunately, deeply rooted socio-economic inequalities and the fragility of social support systems result in post-disaster recovery processes that are slow and uneven, particularly for vulnerable groups.

In a society as religiously and culturally diverse as Semarang, religious moderation presents an opportunity to serve as a more substantive and contextual socio-religious approach. Rather than being confined to the narrative of interfaith tolerance, religious moderation in this study is explored as a form of collective social practice that embodies the values of *tawasuth* (balance), deliberation, social responsibility, and interfaith collaboration in addressing shared challenges. These values hold significant potential to strengthen social cohesion and broaden community participation in responding to crises both in terms of disaster response and the development of sustainable economic resilience (Baytiyeh, 2018; Ferani Mulianingsih, Arif Purnomo, Anang Widhi Nirwansyah, Zuhrian Ivan Arvianto, 2024; Gregg et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023; Mulianingsih et al., 2022; Quinlan, 2020; Ray-Bennett & Shiroshita, 2019).

This study aims to deeply explore the role of religious moderation values particularly tolerance, social solidarity, and interfaith cooperation in supporting disaster risk management practices and the development of community-based economic strategies (Astuti, 2021; Astuti et al., 2022; Deri Saputra, Andarweni Astuti, 2024; Ferani Mulianingsih, Andarweni Astuti, Amin Pujiati, 2025). Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research focuses on flood-affected vulnerable communities in Semarang City as the primary subjects. This approach enables the investigation of the meanings and everyday experiences of residents in internalizing moderate religious values as a form of social strength. Preliminary findings suggest that communities with a collective awareness of the importance of interfaith harmony tend to exhibit higher levels of disaster preparedness, greater engagement in mutual aid during crises, and more success in forming inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable local economic networks (Calero et al., 2024; Fafurida, F., Oktavilia, S., Prajanti, S. D. W., & Maretta, 2020; Hurlimann et al., 2014; Munro, 2020; Safitri et al., 2022; Sector, 2020; Zhang et al., 2023).

Semarang City, as one of Indonesia's major metropolitan areas, faces chronic and intensifying flood hazards due to climate change, environmental degradation, and unsustainable land-use changes. Marginalized communities living along riverbanks, coastal zones, and densely populated neighborhoods bear the brunt of these disasters, experiencing recurrent damage to housing, loss of livelihoods, and disruptions to education and essential services. Official data from the Semarang City Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) in 2023 recorded at least 30 major flood events in the past three years, affecting over 15,000 households annually.

While numerous technical and infrastructural measures have been implemented to mitigate flood impacts, the persistence of socio-economic inequalities and the fragility of social support systems have hindered equitable recovery. In this context, *religious moderation* offers a unique socio-religious approach that extends beyond mere interfaith tolerance, encompassing values such as *tawasuth* (balance), deliberation, social responsibility, and interfaith collaboration. These values hold significant potential for strengthening community cohesion, fostering inclusive participation, and addressing both the immediate and structural dimensions of vulnerability.

The primary contribution of this research lies in elevating religious moderation from a normative principle to a strategic framework that can be operationalized within community development policies and programs. This study provides not only a theoretical foundation but also offers practical recommendations for policymakers, religious organizations, and social empowerment institutions to design interventions that integrate moderate values into Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and community economic empowerment initiatives (Coetzee et al., 2016; Ronan et al., 2016; Shaw et al., 2015; UNISDR, 2009). In doing so, religious moderation can serve as a contextually relevant foundation for strengthening the socio-economic resilience of vulnerable communities particularly in the face of increasingly complex, multidimensional crises affecting major cities across Indonesia.

In this context, religious moderation can be regarded as a key value aligned with the objectives of Social Studies education. Principles such as *tawasuth* (balance), tolerance, deliberation, and social responsibility have the potential to strengthen Social Studies learning in cultivating students' critical awareness of social and ecological realities. Furthermore, these values can be integrated into disaster education within the Social Studies framework, enabling students not only to comprehend disaster risks academically but also to internalize social solidarity and interfaith cooperation as concrete strategies for disaster mitigation.

Through this approach, Social Studies education functions not merely as a medium of knowledge transfer but also as an instrument of social transformation. By embedding the values of religious moderation, Social Studies learning can serve as a platform for fostering inclusivity, participation, and resilience among students and the wider community. This study aims to explore the role of religious moderation in Social Studies education as a strategy to strengthen disaster resilience and support sustainable community-based economic development.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Religious Moderation as a Pillar of Social Resilience in Times of Crisis

As an archipelagic country with high levels of religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity, Indonesia faces considerable challenges in maintaining social cohesion particularly amid the increasing frequency of natural disasters and mounting ecological pressures caused by climate change and environmental degradation (Champion et al., 2020; Denman & James, 2016; Head, 2010; Malalgoda C and Amaratunga D, 2014; Untawale, 1990). Within this context, religious moderation is not only relevant as a normative framework for interfaith relations, but also functions strategically as a foundational element in strengthening community-based social resilience.

Religious moderation, grounded in values such as *tawasuth* (the middle path), tolerance, justice, and deliberation, plays a pivotal role in bridging divides between religious groups. This approach can help mitigate the risk of social fragmentation, which often surfaces when communities are confronted with collective stressors such as natural disasters, economic crises, or resource-based conflicts. Several studies support this argument, showing that the everyday practice of religious moderation significantly contributes to enhancing social solidarity and fostering cross-faith collaboration.

Far from being merely a discourse or moral imperative, religious moderation has demonstrated practical effectiveness during crises. In the case of recurring floods in Semarang, values such as interfaith compassion, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and social empathy have laid the groundwork for resilient community responses. For example, during emergency situations, interfaith community forums have proactively provided logistical aid, set up joint emergency shelters, and offered psychosocial support to victims regardless of their religious background.

Field observations indicate that the presence of interfaith networks not only accelerates disaster response efforts but also strengthens communal belonging and collective responsibility. These values of moderation ultimately function as a form of “social glue,” binding communities together under pressure and providing a foundation for more inclusive and equitable recovery processes.

Therefore, religious moderation should be understood as a social strategy that integrates spiritual, humanitarian, and sustainability dimensions. In confronting the complex and evolving landscape of disaster risk, mainstreaming the principles of moderation into public policy, education, and civic life becomes essential for cultivating communities that are not only tolerant, but also resilient and adaptive to change.

2.2. Participatory Disaster Mitigation and the Reinforcement of Communal Social Values

The understanding of disaster mitigation has undergone a substantial paradigm shift over the past decade. Whereas previous strategies primarily emphasized technical and structural interventions such as the construction of levees, drainage systems, and early warning mechanisms, community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) has increasingly gained recognition as a more inclusive and sustainable approach, particularly in vulnerable areas with limited infrastructure and resources, as is common in many developing countries, including Indonesia.

Community participation is no longer viewed as a complementary component but rather as a central pillar of effective disaster risk reduction efforts. Local involvement encompasses not only preparedness training and evacuation drills but also spatial planning (Das, 2022; Kusumasari & Alam, 2012; Pal et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2024; Wanninayake et al., 2024), risk mapping, and autonomous resource management. In this context, social values such as solidarity, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and communal responsibility serve as the driving forces that enhance the effectiveness of such participation.

Furthermore, the integration of religious moderation values into disaster mitigation programs has proven effective in fostering collective awareness and strengthening social networks among community members. Principles such as intergroup empathy, deliberative decision-making (*musyawarah*), and attentiveness to vulnerable populations provide a moral foundation that deepens social cohesion. Empirical observations from various regions show that communities that internalize these collective values tend to be more adaptive, responsive, and united in confronting crises, both during emergency preparedness and in post-disaster recovery phases.

The theoretical foundation of this study lies at the intersection of social resilience theory and community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR), framed within the socio-religious construct of religious moderation. Social resilience theory emphasizes the capacity of communities to absorb, adapt, and transform in response to shocks, while CBDRR prioritizes grassroots participation, local knowledge, and cultural values in disaster mitigation. Integrating religious moderation into these frameworks positions moral and cultural values as catalysts for resilience-building, bridging social divides, and enabling collaborative action across diverse identity groups.

This study finds that the success of disaster mitigation programs is not solely determined by technological sophistication or financial investment, but significantly influenced by the degree of

social cohesion and the quality of interpersonal communication within the community. When disaster education is delivered through culturally and spiritually relevant channels such as religious leaders or interfaith forums public response tends to be more positive and sustained. These findings suggest that social dimensions and local wisdom are inseparable from effective mitigation strategies.

In conclusion, disaster mitigation approaches grounded in active participation and social-communal values not only enhance community emergency response capacity but also lay the foundation for long-term resilience rooted in local culture and identity. Such approaches are not merely alternatives but essential strategies in addressing the multidimensional challenges of climate crises and increasingly complex natural disasters.

2.3. The Role of Religious Moderation in Promoting Inclusive and Resilient Community-Based Economic Development

In efforts to foster inclusive and sustainable economic development, socially collaborative approaches are increasingly recognized as strategic, particularly amid the deepening structural inequalities experienced by vulnerable communities. Populations residing in disaster-prone areas or with limited access to development resources are often overlooked by conventional economic programs. In this context, religious moderation emerges as a socio-religious approach that not only emphasizes interfaith tolerance but also advocates for social justice, solidarity, and active participation in local economic development.

Religious moderation offers a values-based framework capable of bridging diverse social and cultural backgrounds within an inclusive economic space (Karaosmanoglu et al., 2018; M. Nur et al., 2020; Nisa' & Rofiki, 2022; Putri & Budiman, 2022; Syahrin et al., 2023; Syahrul Syah Sinaga, Restu Ayu Mumpuni, Maria Johana Ari Widayanti, Fajry Sub'haan Syah Sinaga, 2024). Core values such as honesty, mutual assistance, equality, and concern for marginalized groups provide a strong foundation for building community-based economic ecosystems. Local economic initiatives rooted in social trust and collective cooperation have demonstrated greater resilience to economic shocks and adaptability to changing environmental and market conditions (dos Santos et al., 2017; Estell et al., 2023; Karagiannis & Magkos, 2020; Li & Zheng, 2018; Martuti et al., 2022; Rantona, Safutra Soekotjo, Oekan Bakti, Iriana Agustin, 2019).

A concrete example can be observed in the coastal areas of Semarang City, particularly in flood-prone neighborhoods such as Tanjung Mas and Tambaklorok. In these communities, religious leaders and faith-based organizations have actively contributed to the advancement of community economic empowerment programs. Their roles extend beyond facilitating entrepreneurship training or cooperative formation they also act as connectors between previously fragmented social groups. Collaborations fostered through interfaith forums have resulted in cross-religious and cross-cultural economic solidarity, strengthening community social structures and broadening access to various forms of economic support.

In addition to reinforcing social networks, the mainstreaming of moderation values within economic activities also supports the expansion of financial inclusion. Marginalized groups that were previously excluded from formal financial services, such as banking or cooperatives, are becoming more confident and motivated to engage in productive activities, including microenterprises and community-based social entrepreneurship. This model enables communities not only to receive aid but also to become primary actors in grassroots economic transformation.

Thus, religious moderation functions not only as a social adhesive but also as an instrument of economic transformation that emphasizes sustainability, justice, and community self-reliance. This approach offers renewed hope in addressing structural economic challenges and environmental

crises by placing moral and religious values at the core of people- and environment-centered economic development.

Although prior research has examined religious moderation in the context of interfaith harmony, there remains limited empirical evidence on how these values are operationalized in disaster-prone urban environments, particularly in linking *social cohesion* with *sustainable economic recovery*. Most existing studies either focus on normative discourse or fail to connect religious values with measurable community resilience outcomes. This gap is especially critical in multi-religious urban settings like Semarang, where disasters intersect with socio-economic disparities and cultural diversity.

This study aims to explore how the values of religious moderation, specifically tolerance, social solidarity, and interfaith cooperation, can serve as a strategic framework for disaster risk reduction while simultaneously fostering sustainable, community-based economic development in flood-affected marginalized communities. By adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research investigates residents' lived experiences in internalizing and practicing moderation values as part of their social and economic resilience strategies.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach and Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design as formulated by Creswell, which emphasizes an in-depth exploration of individuals' subjective meanings and lived experiences (Creswell, 2016; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Creswell John W., 2018). Within this framework, the research aims to holistically understand how members of vulnerable communities internalize and practice the values of religious moderation as a socio-cultural strategy for coping with disaster-related stress, particularly flooding, while simultaneously engaging in participatory economic resilience-building. Phenomenology is chosen for its capacity to capture the complexity of perceptions, beliefs, and collective narratives embedded in everyday life during times of crisis. The research does not merely seek to identify what participants experience, but also how the meaning of those experiences is constructed, and why the values of religious moderation become central to the processes of recovery and the reinforcement of social and economic resilience.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design following Creswell's framework, aiming to capture the lived experiences and subjective meanings of participants in relation to religious moderation as a socio-cultural strategy for coping with flood-related disasters and fostering economic resilience. The phenomenological approach is selected for its strength in uncovering the depth of personal narratives, collective values, and shared practices that shape community resilience.

3.2. Research Site and Subject Characteristics

The research was conducted in three vulnerable communities in Semarang City, Indonesia, characterized by high geographical and socio-economic susceptibility to flood disasters. These locations include riverside settlements, coastal zones, and densely populated urban neighborhoods all of which have historically suffered severe annual flooding. According to the 2023 report from the Semarang Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), over 15,000 households were affected by at least 30 major flooding events over the past three years, resulting in extensive infrastructure damage, loss of livelihoods, and decreased access to basic services.

The research was conducted in three flood-prone communities in Semarang City: Tambaklorok, Tanjung Mas, and Sawah Besar areas with high socio-economic vulnerability and recurrent flood events.

Inclusion criteria for participants included:

1. Directly affected residents who had experienced at least one major flood in the past two years.
2. Religious leaders (from different faiths) actively engaged in community activities.
3. Local stakeholders such as neighborhood leaders, social activists, and representatives from community-based organizations.

A total of 18 participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives. This selection method prioritized individuals with rich experiential knowledge relevant to the research objectives.

Participants were selected purposively to represent diverse key actors in the community's social dynamics, including:

- Interfaith religious leaders, who serve as moral anchors and social navigators, contributing to the development of moderation narratives, cross-identity solidarity, and collective mobilization;
- Directly affected residents, who offer empirical insights into community-level experiences of disaster and the process of economic adaptation in post-crisis situations;
- Local stakeholders, consisting of neighborhood leaders (RT/RW), social activists, and representatives from local government institutions involved in disaster mitigation planning and community-based economic empowerment initiatives.

3.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data were gathered through a triangulated mix of complementary methods to ensure both depth and validity of findings:

1. In-depth interviews were conducted with 18 key informants using a semi-structured guide developed around key moderation values (tolerance, justice, deliberation, and balance). These interviews aimed to uncover the dynamics of value internalization in crisis contexts, as well as strategies for survival and community collaboration in rebuilding the local economy.

Interviews were guided by a semi-structured protocol built around core themes of religious moderation. Key example questions included:

- *"How do you understand and apply the values of religious moderation in your daily life?"*
- *"Can you share specific experiences where these values helped the community during a flood?"*
- *"What challenges have you faced in promoting solidarity and cooperation across different religious groups?"*
- *"How have these values influenced economic recovery efforts in your community?"*
- *"In what ways do you think religious moderation can strengthen disaster preparedness in the future?"*

2. Participant observation was carried out from the disaster-prone season (early rainy period) through the post-disaster phase, focusing on activities that reflect social solidarity and public spirituality. The researcher documented phenomena such as interfaith cooperation, the establishment of communal kitchens, community-managed relief posts, and informal economic activities emerging from neighborly support. The researcher observed interfaith activities, communal kitchens, cooperative meetings, environmental clean-ups, and other initiatives linked to disaster response and economic recovery. Detailed field notes captured both verbal and non-verbal interactions.

3. Document analysis included reviews of local disaster-related regulations, minutes from community deliberations, archives of religious events, and local media coverage depicting post-flood recovery initiatives.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

All qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, enabling the researcher to identify, categorize, and interpret patterns of meaning. The analytical process involved the following stages:

1. Verbatim transcription of all interview recordings and field notes;
2. Initial coding to extract major themes such as narratives of tolerance, social capital, faith-based solidarity, and community-driven economic transformation;
3. Thematic categorization to explore interrelations among themes and their relevance to the local context (e.g., how community deliberation practices lead to the establishment of resident-owned cooperatives);
4. Data triangulation by comparing interview results, observation findings, and documentary evidence, followed by focused group discussions (mini-FGDs) with selected informants to validate interpretative insights.

This thematic analysis facilitates the construction of an interpretive narrative that not only captures the empirical realities faced by vulnerable communities but also explicitly illustrates how the values of religious moderation are articulated in collective action and contribute to the development of socially and economically resilient structures in disaster-prone contexts.

4. Results

The findings of this study affirm that the application of religious moderation values significantly contributes to strengthening the social and economic resilience of vulnerable communities, particularly in the context of recurrent flooding in the city of Semarang. According to data from the Semarang City Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), as of May 2025, twelve major flood events had occurred since January, directly affecting more than 5,400 households. The most impacted areas include the neighborhoods of Tambaklorok, Tanjung Mas, and Sawah Besar. These flood events not only caused physical damage to residential areas and public facilities but also disrupted daily economic activities and exacerbated social vulnerability in the affected regions (Asad et al., 2022; Bedford et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2022; Loockwood, 2021; Neumann et al., 2015; Sene, 2010; Tweneboah-Koduah et al., 2022; Yap et al., 2023).

First, from a social perspective, communities that actively embody the principles of religious moderation demonstrated significantly higher levels of solidarity and social cohesion during the disaster. In Tambaklorok and Tanjung Mas, for instance, residents from diverse religious backgrounds collaborated voluntarily to establish emergency response posts. Communal kitchens and the distribution of logistical aid were organized collectively through interfaith communication forums that had existed prior to the disaster. Interviews with local religious leaders and neighborhood officials revealed that these forums function not merely as ceremonial spaces but as active platforms to cultivate a culture of dialogue, formulate collective responses, and foster empathy across identities. In emergency situations, such pre-existing interfaith communication structures serve as the foundation for rapid and inclusive collective decision-making.

Second, in economic terms, religious moderation appeared to influence the speed and effectiveness of post-disaster community recovery. Communities that uphold moderation values—such as equality, mutual assistance, and social trust were quicker to establish economic recovery mechanisms rooted in solidarity. In the coastal area of Tanjung Mas, for example, an interfaith cooperative was formed to provide interest-free revolving loans to flood-affected residents, helping

them restart small-scale businesses such as food stalls, seafood processing, and recycling-based enterprises. These initiatives not only facilitated household income recovery but also reinforced local socio-economic networks.

Third, religious practices that internalize values of simplicity, social responsibility, and justice were found to drive active participation in environmental resilience programs. Activities such as drainage cleaning, mangrove rehabilitation, and community-led evacuation drills in RW 05 of Tanjung Mas involved people across age groups and faiths. Based on participatory observation, the majority of residents indicated that they were motivated to take part due to the encouragement of religious leaders who framed environmental actions as expressions of faith and moral obligation within religious life.

Fourth, the application of moderation values fostered a more open and democratic communication climate in local decision-making processes. In community forums, decisions regarding aid allocation and recovery planning were made participatively and based on deliberative consensus. According to qualitative survey data from 60 respondents across the three vulnerable communities, approximately 83% reported feeling more secure, confident, and socially prepared to face future floods due to the presence of inclusive, non-discriminatory social interaction spaces. In contrast, communities lacking traditions of interfaith dialogue reported more frequent conflicts during aid distribution and slower community mobilization efforts.

The findings of this study corroborate previous research by providing contextual evidence from vulnerable communities in Semarang, while introducing a novel dimension through the integration of religious moderation as an operational framework in post-disaster economic recovery. Community-based economic empowerment strategies underpinned by trust and mutual cooperation demonstrate greater resilience to economic shocks. This study extends that understanding by revealing that religious moderation can serve as a catalyst for accelerating the formation of inclusive economic networks, even in highly vulnerable geographical and social contexts. This discussion not only reaffirms the consistency of the findings with existing literature but also highlights the unique contribution of this research to the broader academic dialogue, namely by positioning religious moderation as an integrated strategy for disaster risk reduction and sustainable economic development. The integration of this perspective enriches cross-disciplinary discourse at the intersection of religious studies, disaster management, and community development.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that religious moderation is not merely a normative religious framework, but a practical foundation that can be operationalized in disaster response and community development contexts. The values of moderation act as a critical catalyst for strengthening social networks, accelerating community-based economic recovery, and cultivating collective resilience that is both contextual and sustainable.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that religious moderation functions not merely as a normative concept in interfaith relations, but also as a value-based platform that can be operationalized in disaster risk management and community-driven economic development. Amid the intensifying flood disasters in Semarang recorded over 15 major flood events in the first five months of 2025 (BPBD Semarang, 2025), moderate values such as *tawasuth* (balance), tolerance, social justice, and deliberation have emerged as critical drivers enhancing the community's resilience and capacity for recovery, particularly in high-risk coastal areas such as Tambaklorok and Tanjung Mas.

5.1. Religious Moderation as a Pillar of Social Institutional Capacity in Disaster Mitigation

Aligned with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015, which emphasizes the importance of a “*strong institutional basis for implementation*” in disaster risk reduction, this study finds that communities practicing religious moderation have developed robust informal social institutions, even in the absence of formal governmental structures. Moderately inclined religious leaders serve as central actors in organizing community responses. They not only mobilize residents to establish emergency posts and communal kitchens but also ensure equitable and non-discriminatory aid distribution.

The presence of inclusive religious values fosters a coherent and resilient social environment. This resonates with the theory advanced by the National Council of Social Service, which highlights social cohesion and mutual trust as foundational elements in building civil community resilience to disaster-related pressures. In Semarang, such cohesion was nurtured through pre-existing interfaith forums that evolved into critical communication channels during emergencies.

5.2. Integrating Moderate Values in Post-Disaster Community Economic Recovery

According to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, strengthening community economies is a vital part of recovery and rehabilitation that requires direct community participation. Within this framework, religious moderation has proven to provide a value-based foundation for the emergence of inclusive and adaptive solidarity economies. An example is the establishment of an interfaith cooperative in Tanjung Mas following major floods, which provides micro-financing for small-scale, environmentally sustainable businesses such as household waste recycling and composting.

This initiative’s success is rooted in daily religious practices that emphasize distributive justice, equality, and social empathy. The active involvement of women and youth in these post-flood economic activities aligns with Priority 4 of the Sendai Framework: strengthening community-based preparedness to *build back better*. Local economic resilience in this context is not the result of external intervention but the product of internal community values tested during a crisis.

5.3. Moderation as a Mechanism for Cross-Identity and Cross-Structural Collaboration

Religious moderation has also proven to serve as a bridge between formal social structures (such as village administrations, disaster management agencies, and religious organizations) and informal structures (such as neighborhood leaders, local figures, and grassroots forums). This aligns with the *whole-of-society* approach emphasized in the Sendai Framework, which underscores that disaster risk reduction cannot be the responsibility of governments alone but must involve all sectors and identities of society.

Field data reveal that interfaith forums play an active role not only in fostering religious harmony but also in absorbing community aspirations, preventing aid distribution conflicts, and co-designing participatory disaster training programs. Therefore, religious moderation functions not solely as a belief system but as a strategic mechanism for fostering social collaboration ecosystems during emergencies and recovery periods.

5.4. Religious Moderation and Community Resilience Education

The Hyogo Framework also underscores the importance of education and public awareness in cultivating disaster-ready communities. In this regard, religious moderation-based educational approaches have proven to be more effective in reaching vulnerable groups often neglected by technocratic interventions. Religious sermons, neighborhood religious study circles, and community

discussions that emphasize social responsibility, simplicity, and justice have deepened public understanding of the need for disaster preparedness.

Empirical evidence from surveys indicates that over 80% of respondents from interfaith communities felt more socially and psychologically prepared to face floods compared to those in communities without open interreligious dialogue. This confirms that resilience is not solely built through physical infrastructure but also through the strength of social values embedded in daily communal life.

5.5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

1. Theoretical Implications

This study expands the discourse on religious moderation by positioning it within the landscape of disaster risk management and community-based economic recovery. Religious moderation is shown to be relevant not only in the context of pluralism but also deeply compatible with the principles of community-based disaster risk reduction outlined in the Hyogo and Sendai Frameworks. Moderate values foster collective resilience that emerges not from formal institutional structures but from the strength of social and spiritual relationships within communities.

2. Practical Implications

The findings suggest that local governments, disaster management agencies, and religious institutions should integrate moderate values as a core component of capacity-building programs in disaster-prone areas. Strengthening moderation must move beyond ceremonial declarations or peace campaigns and be internalized through disaster preparedness training modules grounded in adaptive, egalitarian, and participatory religious values. Cross-sector collaboration should be institutionalized through interfaith communication forums and recognized functionally within the local disaster governance system.

6. Conclusion

This study affirms that religious moderation functions not merely as a normative concept for maintaining interfaith harmony but has also been empirically validated as a practical value framework that plays a strategic role in strengthening the social and economic resilience of vulnerable communities. This role becomes particularly significant in the face of recurring natural disasters, such as the major floods that frequently affect the city of Semarang. Throughout 2025, the Semarang City Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) recorded at least 15 major flood events, impacting thousands of households in coastal and riverbank areas, particularly in highly vulnerable neighborhoods such as Tambaklorok and Tanjung Mas, which are known for their geographic and socio-economic susceptibility.

Overall, this study concludes that religious moderation represents a strategic, cross-dimensional, and transformative approach. It not only reinforces the social fabric within pluralistic societies but also holds substantial potential for integration into disaster risk reduction (DRR) frameworks and community-based economic development programs. Therefore, religious moderation should not be viewed merely as part of the rhetoric of diversity, but rather as a relevant and urgent instrument of public policy in addressing the multidimensional crises of the present and future.

In this context, communities that have cultivated a culture of moderation grounded in principles such as *tawasuth* (balance), deliberation (*musyawarah*), cross-identity empathy, and collective solidarity (*gotong royong*) demonstrate superior adaptive capacities. These communities are able to respond to disasters swiftly and cooperatively, not only during emergency phases but also throughout the post-disaster economic recovery process.

7. Suggestion

Based on the findings and analysis conducted in this study, several strategic recommendations can be proposed to strengthen the application of religious moderation values within the framework of disaster risk reduction and sustainable economic development in vulnerable communities:

7.1. Integration of Moderation Principles into Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Policy Design

Local governments, particularly the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) of Semarang City, should incorporate the core values of religious moderation—such as balance (*tawasuth*), deliberation, tolerance, and mutual cooperation into community-based disaster preparedness training curricula. These training programs must be held regularly in flood-prone areas such as Tambaklorok, Tanjung Mas, and Sawah Besar, which experienced more than 12 major flood events and impacted over 5,400 households in the first quarter of 2025 alone.

7.2. Optimizing the Role of Moderate Religious Leaders in Building Social Resilience

Interfaith religious leaders with a moderate orientation must receive institutional support to function as key facilitators in fostering community resilience. They can spearhead the formation and reinforcement of permanent interfaith communication forums. Such forums have proven effective in expediting logistics responses, organizing community kitchens, and ensuring equitable aid distribution during crises. Therefore, formal recognition of these forums as strategic partners in regional DRR systems is essential.

7.3. Strengthening Community-Based Economies through a Moderation-Based Approach

The government, through the Cooperative and MSME Office of Semarang City, is advised to fully support the development of interfaith cooperative models emerging in coastal areas such as Tanjung Mas. Support may include training in social entrepreneurship, legal assistance for business registration, access to interest-free revolving funds, and education on circular economy practices such as converting waste into value-added products. Collaboration with religious institutions can help expand the reach of these initiatives across sectors and faith communities.

7.4. Resilience Education Based on Inclusive Spiritual Values

Educational institutions, both formal and non-formal, located in vulnerable areas should adopt curricula that integrate moderation values in the context of disaster risk reduction. Educational content should be culturally contextualized and delivered through community-based approaches by religious figures, environmental activists, and local leaders. Key focus areas include social justice, ecological responsibility, simplicity, and tolerance. This strategy is particularly effective in reaching segments of the population often overlooked by formal technical training programs.

7.5. Legalization and Strengthening of Cross-Identity Communication Forums

Field data indicate that organically formed interfaith dialogue spaces at the subdistrict level should be granted legal status through local regulations or mayoral decrees. Legal recognition will enhance the capacity of these forums as strategic platforms for both disaster response and socioeconomic development. It is strongly recommended that BPBD, the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB), and civil society organizations synergize to increase the effectiveness of these forums in both normal and emergency conditions.

7.6. Replication of the Moderation Model in Other Vulnerable Communities

The successful practices demonstrated in communities such as Tambaklorok and Tanjung Mas should serve as a reference for replication in other high-risk areas. Replication must be grounded in active community participation and adapted to the local socio-cultural context. This ensures that implementation is not top-down, but rather becomes part of reinforcing community autonomy.

7.7. Development of Further Research

To deepen understanding of how moderation values contribute to social and economic resilience, further research employing quantitative or mixed-methods approaches is recommended. The scope of research should also be expanded to include other vulnerable areas beyond Semarang City, in order to test the broader relevance and replicability of the findings across different geographic and sociological contexts.

Declarations

Author Contributions.

Andarweni Astuti: Literature review, research conceptualization, and field data collection.

Ferani Mulianingsih: Methodology design, interview implementation, and qualitative data analysis.

Kintoko: Validation of findings, theoretical contextualization (Hyogo and Sendai Frameworks), and thematic interpretation.

Arif Purnomo: Initial manuscript drafting and argument structure development.

Deri Saputra: Review, final editing, and manuscript preparation for publication.

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Ethical Approval. (Please provide information on respect for privacy and approval by the ethics committee/ethical approval with the reference number)

Data Availability Statement. The qualitative data supporting the findings of this study, including interview transcripts, observation notes, and analytical documents, are stored in the research team's internal repository and are available upon request, subject to ethical considerations and participant privacy.

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