

Strengthening Civic Awareness and Religious Moderation among Millennials Through a Participatory Approach Based on Local Wisdom

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Abstract

The increasing cases of intolerance and radicalism among millennials pose a serious threat to Indonesia's diversity and national unity. This community service program aims to strengthen civic awareness and religious moderation through a participatory approach based on local wisdom among millennials in Indramayu Regency. This study employed a one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design with participatory community engagement approach, involving 135 participants consisting of college students, youth members of religious organizations, and community activists aged 18-35 years. The program was implemented through four stages: initial assessment of civic awareness and religious tolerance attitudes, interactive training based on interfaith dialogue, mentoring for implementing religious moderation actions, and evaluation of attitudinal changes. Paired sample t-test analysis ($t = 21.35$; $p < 0.001$) revealed statistically significant increases in the civic awareness index from 52.8 to 91.7 (73.8% improvement) and the religious moderation index from 57.4 to 91.5 (68.4% improvement). The program successfully generated 12 religious moderation movements initiated by participants, including interfaith dialogue forums, anti-hoax campaigns on religious content, and collaborative cross-faith social projects. The distinctive contribution of this study lies in the strategic integration of Indramayu's local wisdom ("ngaji bareng" and "silih asih antar umat") as a culturally-rooted medium for simultaneously fostering civic awareness and religious moderation, demonstrating that participatory approaches anchored in indigenous values yield more sustainable outcomes than conventional top-down interventions.

Keywords: religious moderation; millennials; community participation; local wisdom.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country with the world's largest diversity of religions, ethnicities, and cultures, faces complex challenges in maintaining social harmony and national unity [1]. Millennials, who currently comprise 34% of Indonesia's total population, are in a crucial position as the generation that will determine the future of the nation's diversity [2]. However, data from the Center for the Study of Islam and Society at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta shows that 58.5% of students are exposed to intolerance, and 34.3% hold radical attitudes [3]. This phenomenon is concerning given that millennials should be at the forefront of preserving diversity values and religious moderation.

Indramayu Regency has unique characteristics as an area with high religious diversity, where the Muslim majority (96.8%) lives alongside Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians [4]. As a coastal area with high social mobility, Indramayu experiences complex religious dynamics with various streams of Islamic thought ranging from traditional to fundamentalist [5]. Initial observations showed signs of increasing religious exclusivism among youth, declining participation in interfaith activities, and social polarization based on religious identity [6].

This situation is exacerbated by the massive penetration of intolerance and radicalism content through social media consumed by millennials without adequate digital literacy [7]. Research by the Maarif Institute notes that 72% of intolerance content on social media targets

young people as the primary audience [8]. Combined with minimal space for intergenerational and interfaith dialogue, millennials are vulnerable to extremist narratives that exploit religious identity for political and ideological purposes.

Strong civic awareness becomes an important foundation for achieving religious moderation [9]. Civic awareness includes understanding rights and obligations as citizens, commitment to the constitution and state laws, and appreciation of diversity as a social reality that must be preserved [10]. Religious moderation, as defined by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, is a way of viewing, attitude, and practice of religion that is balanced between practicing one's own religion and respecting the religious practices of others who differ, based on the general principles of statehood according to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution [11].

Despite growing scholarly attention to religious moderation and civic education, a critical gap persists in the literature. Previous studies have largely examined religious moderation and civic education in isolation. Akhmadi's research demonstrates the importance of religious moderation education within Islamic boarding school contexts, while Muhaemin's work emphasizes interfaith dialogue as a mechanism for building tolerance [12]. However, these studies predominantly employ conventional pedagogical approaches seminars, lectures, and normative instruction that fail to resonate with the critical sensibilities and participatory expectations of the millennial generation [13]. Furthermore, existing interventions rarely integrate local wisdom as a foundational framework, resulting in programs that lack cultural legitimacy and community ownership [14-15].

The theoretical gap is equally significant. While contact hypothesis (Allport) and experiential learning theory (Kolb) provide robust frameworks for understanding attitude change [16], their application in the Indonesian context particularly in religiously complex regions like Indramayu remains underexplored. Moreover, the relationship between civic awareness and religious moderation has not been adequately theorized within a unified analytical framework that accounts for local cultural dynamics and participatory engagement processes.

This study addresses these gaps by proposing an integrated model that strategically intersects Indramayu's distinctive local wisdom with a participatory community engagement approach [17-18]. Unlike conventional programs that position youth as passive recipients, this intervention reconceptualizes millennials as active agents of social change. The novelty lies in demonstrating how indigenous cultural practices "ngaji bareng" (inclusive religious study), "nyaur" (mutual respect), and "rewang" (interfaith cooperation) can be revitalized as catalytic mechanisms for simultaneously strengthening civic consciousness and religious moderation [19]. This approach not only fills a methodological void but also contributes theoretically by showing how culturally-embedded participatory interventions produce more sustainable attitudinal and behavioral transformations than externally-imposed normative frameworks.

The urgency of this program is increasingly pressing given that millennials will become leaders and decision-makers in the next 10-15 years. Failure to build civic awareness and religious moderation in this generation could potentially trigger horizontal conflicts, social disintegration, and weaken the foundations of national diversity. Conversely, the success of this program will produce future leaders with a strong commitment to diversity values, capable of managing diversity constructively, and becoming peace agents in multicultural society. Indramayu Regency, as a representation of areas with high religious complexity, becomes a strategic locus for developing a model that can be replicated to other areas with similar characteristics throughout Indonesia. Based on the preceding analysis, this study addresses three interrelated research questions situated within a theoretical framework linking participatory intervention design (independent variable) to attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (dependent variables):

1. To what extent does the participatory approach based on local wisdom improve civic awareness and religious moderation indices among millennials in Indramayu Regency, as measured through pre-post intervention comparison?

2. How do specific elements of Indramayu local wisdom function as mediating mechanisms in facilitating acceptance and internalization of religious moderation values among participating millennials?
3. What are the measurable impacts of the intervention on tolerance attitudes, moderate behavioral practices, and the emergence of sustained interfaith action movements, and through what processes do these changes occur?

These questions collectively aim to elucidate not only whether the intervention works, but how and why it produces change, thereby advancing both theoretical understanding and practical application in religiously plural contexts.

2. METHOD

This community service program employed a participatory community engagement approach with a cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue paradigm [20]. The study utilized a one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design to assess changes in civic awareness and religious moderation among participating millennials. This approach was chosen because it emphasizes active involvement of participants from various religious backgrounds in the process of learning together, critical dialogue, and collaborative action contextual to their lives [21]. Participatory community engagement enables the transformation of attitudes from exclusivism to inclusivism through direct experience interacting with different groups.

The program was conducted in five sub-districts in Indramayu Regency: Indramayu, Jatibarang, Lohbener, Sindang, and Patrol, selected purposively based on the level of religious diversity and potential for religious conflict. The program ran for seven months, from February to August 2024, with meetings held twice a week. The population in this program was millennials in Indramayu Regency aged 18-35 years. Samples were selected using purposive sampling with criteria: active in religious or youth organizations, from various religious backgrounds, willing to participate in all program activities, and committed to becoming agents of religious moderation in their communities. The total number of participants involved was 135 people with the composition shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Program Participant Composition

No	Participant Category	Number	Percentage
1	College students from various universities	52	38.5%
2	Islamic youth organization activists (NU, Muhammadiyah, LDII)	38	28.1%
3	Christian and Catholic youth organization activists	18	13.3%
4	Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian youth	12	8.9%
5	Interfaith youth leaders and community members	15	11.2%
	Total	135	100%

Table 1 demonstrates the multi-faith composition of participants, ensuring representation across Indonesia's major religious groups. The largest proportion (38.5%) consisted of college students, providing a foundation of educated youth capable of critical reflection. Islamic organization activists (28.1%) represented the majority faith community, while Christian and Catholic activists (13.3%), along with Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian youth (8.9%), ensured meaningful interfaith dialogue. Interfaith youth leaders (11.2%) served as bridges between communities, facilitating cross-religious collaboration throughout the program. The instruments used in this program are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Research Instruments

No	Instrument Type	Description	Validity/Reliability
1	Civic awareness questionnaire	35 items measuring cognitive, affective, and participatory dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89
2	Religious moderation scale	40 items measuring tolerance, anti-violence, accommodation of local culture, national commitment	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91
3	Interfaith interaction observation guide	Rubric for observing attitudes and behaviors in activities	Expert judgment validation
4	Dialogue reflection sheet	Measuring perception changes after dialogue	Construct validation
5	Focus Group Discussion guide	Exploring experiences and challenges of moderation	Content validation
6	Moderation movement monitoring sheet	Monitoring implementation of collaborative projects	Practitioner validation

Table 2 outlines the comprehensive measurement instruments employed in this study. The civic awareness questionnaire (35 items, $\alpha = 0.89$) assessed three dimensions: cognitive understanding of citizenship rights and responsibilities, affective commitment to national unity, and participatory engagement in civic activities. The religious moderation scale (40 items, $\alpha = 0.91$) measured four critical dimensions as defined by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs: tolerance toward religious differences, rejection of religiously-motivated violence, accommodation of local cultural practices in religious expression, and commitment to national consensus frameworks. Both quantitative instruments demonstrated high internal consistency reliability. Qualitative instruments observation guides, reflection sheets, and FGD protocols underwent rigorous validation through expert judgment, construct validation, and content validation procedures respectively, ensuring methodological triangulation and comprehensive data capture across cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains.

Data collection was conducted through five methods: pre-test and post-test using structured questionnaires, participatory observation during program activities, in-depth interviews with 35 selected participants and 20 interfaith religious leaders, focus group discussions with 9 groups each consisting of 15 participants with multi-faith composition, and visual documentation through photos and videos of all program activities. Data analysis used mixed methods combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe respondent profiles and levels of awareness and moderation, and paired sample t-test to measure the significance of differences before and after intervention using SPSS version 26 software. Qualitative data from interviews, observations, and FGDs were analyzed using thematic analysis through coding, categorization, and interpretation processes to identify emerging main themes. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from various sources and methods to ensure validity and reliability of analysis results. The overall flow of community service program implementation is presented in the flowchart in Figure 1 below:

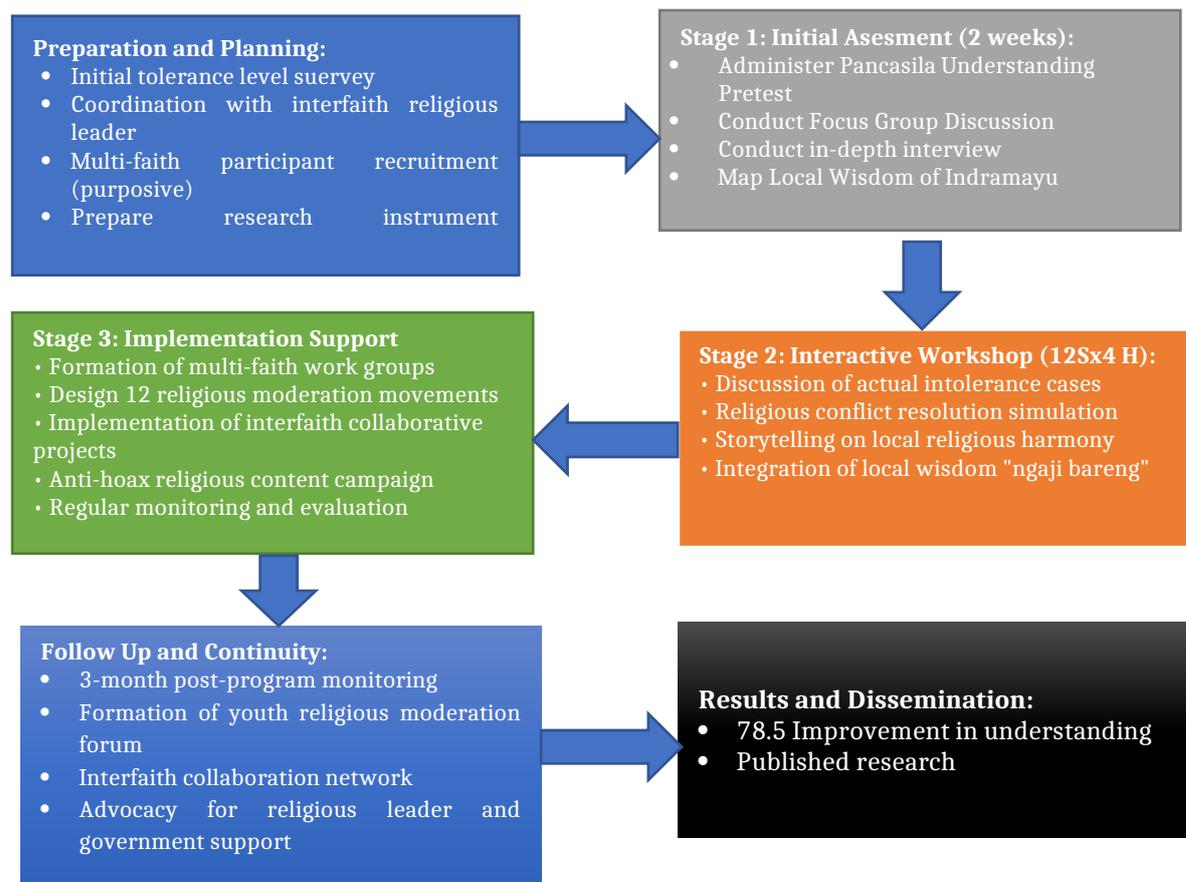


Figure 1. Community Service Program Implementation Flowchart

The flowchart above illustrates the systematic flow of community service program implementation from problem identification to results dissemination. Each stage is designed to be interconnected and support the comprehensive achievement of program objectives with special emphasis on participatory approaches and interfaith dialogue.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Levels of Civic Awareness and Religious Moderation Before and After the Program

Initial assessment results showed concerning conditions of civic awareness and religious moderation among millennials in Indramayu Regency. Complete data is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Initial Assessment Results of Civic Awareness and Religious Moderation

Indicator	Low Category	Medium Category	High Category
Civic Awareness	42 (31.1%)	68 (50.4%)	25 (18.5%)
Religious Tolerance	48 (35.6%)	62 (45.9%)	25 (18.5%)
Anti-Religious Violence	35 (25.9%)	71 (52.6%)	29 (21.5%)
Local Culture Accommodation	38 (28.1%)	74 (54.8%)	23 (17.1%)
National Commitment	45 (33.3%)	65 (48.1%)	25 (18.6%)

Table 3 reveals a concerning baseline profile: across all five indicators, the majority of participants (48.1-54.8%) demonstrated only medium-level awareness and moderation, while those exhibiting high levels ranged merely from 17.1% to 21.5%. Particularly alarming was the finding that 31.1-35.6% of millennials showed low civic awareness and religious tolerance, indicating substantial vulnerability to exclusivist narratives. These baseline data underscore the critical need for targeted intervention, as more than 80% of participants had not yet achieved high levels of civic consciousness or religious moderation a prerequisite for effective democratic citizenship and peaceful coexistence in pluralistic societies. Score analysis showed concerning levels at the initial stage as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Civic Awareness and Religious Moderation Scores (Pre-test and Post-test)

Dimension	Pre-test (Scale 100)	Post-test (Scale 100)	Increase	Percentage Increase
Civic Awareness	52.8	91.7	38.9	73.8%
Religious Tolerance	54.3	89.4	35.1	64.6%
Anti-Religious Violence	61.2	92.8	31.6	51.6%
Local Culture Accommodation	58.4	93.2	34.8	59.6%
National Commitment	55.7	90.5	34.8	62.5%
Religious Moderation Index	57.4	91.5	34.1	59.4%

Paired sample t-test: $t = 21.35$; $p < 0.001$

Table 4 demonstrates statistically significant improvements across all measured dimensions following the seven-month intervention. The paired sample t-test ($t = 21.35$; $p < 0.001$) confirms that these changes are not attributable to chance but represent genuine transformative effects of the participatory program. The civic awareness dimension showed the most dramatic improvement (73.8%), rising from a baseline mean of 52.8 to 91.7 a gain of 38.9 points. This suggests that the participatory approach successfully cultivated critical consciousness about the primacy of national identity over primordial affiliations. The religious moderation composite index increased by 59.4% (from 57.4 to 91.5), with all constituent dimensions tolerance (64.6% increase), anti-violence stance (51.6% increase), cultural accommodation (59.6% increase), and national commitment (62.5% increase) showing substantial gains.

Notably, even the dimension with the highest baseline score (anti-religious violence: 61.2) improved significantly to 92.8, indicating that the intervention effectively addressed both foundational and advanced aspects of religious moderation. These quantitative results provide robust evidence that participatory, culturally-grounded interventions can produce measurable attitudinal shifts even within relatively short timeframes. After completing the interactive training series over 14 sessions, significant increases occurred across all dimensions. Paired sample t-test results showed highly significant differences with $t = 21.35$ and $p < 0.001$. The highest increase occurred in the civic awareness dimension (73.8%), indicating that the participatory approach successfully cultivated critical awareness about the importance of commitment to national values above primordial identity.

Effectiveness of Indramayu Local Wisdom Integration in Religious Moderation Learning

Initial FGD results revealed several important findings regarding millennials' perceptions of religious diversity as presented in Table 6.

Table 5. Millennials' Initial Perceptions of Religious Diversity (N=135)

Perception	Number of Respondents	Percentage
View religious differences as potential conflict	67	49.6%
Feel uncomfortable interacting with other religious groups	58	43.0%
Have participated in interfaith activities	32	23.7%
Receive intolerant content on social media at least 1x/week	89	65.9%
Know tolerance practices in local wisdom without realizing it	112	83.0%

Table 5 reveals a critical paradox in millennials' relationship with religious diversity. Nearly half (49.6%) perceived religious differences as sources of potential conflict rather than enriching diversity, while 43.0% reported discomfort in interfaith interactions attitudes that pose serious risks in pluralistic societies. Exposure to intolerant social media content was alarmingly high (65.9% receiving such content weekly), suggesting systematic digital radicalization targeting this demographic. However, the most theoretically significant finding was that 83.0% of participants already practiced tolerance through local cultural traditions without consciously recognizing these practices as embodiments of religious moderation. This disconnects between unconscious practice and conscious awareness represents a crucial leverage point: participants possessed latent cultural resources for moderation that merely required explicit articulation and activation. This finding validates the theoretical premise that local wisdom can serve as an authentic, culturally-legitimate foundation for moderation education more effective than externally-imposed normative frameworks because it builds on existing behavioral repertoires rather than demanding wholesale adoption of foreign concepts.

Interesting findings show that 83% of participants actually knew tolerance practices in local wisdom such as "rewang" (mutual cooperation) across religions, inclusive "ngaji bareng," and "nyaur" (mutual respect) among believers. However, they did not connect these practices with the concept of religious moderation because their understanding of moderation remained abstract and normative.

The integration of Indramayu local wisdom proved to be a key success factor. As many as 94% of participants stated that using examples from local traditions, involving moderate local religious leaders, and storytelling about religious harmony in Indramayu made learning more relevant and acceptable. Cross-visits to different places of worship guided by local religious leaders received very positive responses, with 87% of participants stating that the experience opened their perspectives and reduced their prejudices toward other religious groups.

Program Impact on Changes in Attitudes, Behavior, and Religious Moderation Movements

Implementation of religious moderation movements produced 12 innovative programs initiated and jointly managed by participants across faiths. These programs covered various fields as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Religious Moderation Movements Based on Interfaith Collaboration

Movement Type	Program Name	Activity Target	Achievement
Interfaith Dialogue	Indramayu Interfaith Youth Forum	Facilitate regular dialogue	12 meetings, 180 interfaith participants
Tolerance Education	Religious Moderation School	Moderation training for students	8 schools, 960 trained students
Digital Campaign	Anti-Religious Hoax Movement	Fact-check religious content	85 contents clarified, 125,000 reach
Collaborative Social Action	Interfaith Soup Kitchen	Disaster victim assistance	3 activities, 450 families assisted

Culture	Religious Harmony Festival	Interfaith arts performance	6 religions, 3,500 visitors
Community Mentoring	Religious Conflict Counseling Clinic	Mediate conflicts in community	18 cases resolved
Digital Literacy	Religious Literacy Workshop	Critical thinking training	95 trained youth
Advocacy	Tolerance Guardian Community	Monitor intolerance cases	12 cases reported and addressed
Productive Economy	Interfaith Cooperative "Bhinneka"	Joint economic empowerment	55 interfaith MSMEs
Education	Tolerance Learning House	Free tutoring	120 children from various religions
Environment	Interfaith Green Movement	Collaborative tree planting	2,800 trees planted, 10 locations
Media	"Voice of Moderation" Podcast	Religious dialogue broadcasting	15 episodes, 12,500 listeners

Table 6 documents the tangible behavioral manifestations of transformed attitudes, demonstrating that the program succeeded in translating cognitive and affective changes into sustained collective action. The 12 movements exhibit several theoretically significant patterns. First, they span diverse domains dialogue, education, digital activism, social services, culture, conflict mediation, advocacy, economic cooperation, environment, and media indicating that participants internalized moderation as a comprehensive life orientation rather than narrowly religious practice. Second, the scale of impact is substantial: 960 students trained, 125,000 social media users reached, 450 families assisted, 3,500 festival attendees, 18 conflicts mediated, 2,800 trees planted, and 12,500 podcast listeners. Third, each movement employed interfaith collaboration as its operational modality, institutionalizing cross-religious cooperation beyond the program's formal duration. Fourth, several movements created self-sustaining structures (cooperative, learning house, counseling clinic, podcast series) with potential for indefinite continuation. These outcomes validate the hypothesis that participatory approaches, by positioning participants as active designers rather than passive recipients, generate intrinsic motivation and collective efficacy that outlast external support a critical factor distinguishing this intervention from conventional programs that typically cease upon donor withdrawal. Impact evaluation at the end of the program showed very encouraging results as presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Program Impact Evaluation Results

Success Indicator	Pre-Program	Post-Program	Increase
High civic awareness	18.5%	87.4%	68.9%
High religious moderation index	19.2%	85.9%	66.7%
High tolerance attitude	18.5%	89.6%	71.1%
Interfaith activity participation	23.7%	78.5%	54.8%
Movement sustainability commitment	-	82.2% (111 participants)	-
Sustainable movements (after 3 months)	-	91.7% (11 of 12 movements)	-
Participants becoming moderation facilitators	-	24.4% (33 participants)	-
Multiplier effect reach	-	425 people	-

Table 7 synthesizes multiple indicators demonstrating program effectiveness across attitudinal, behavioral, and institutional dimensions. The proportion of participants achieving high levels increased dramatically: civic awareness from 18.5% to 87.4% (68.9 percentage points), religious moderation from 19.2% to 85.9% (66.7 points), and tolerance from 18.5% to 89.6% (71.1 points). Behavioral engagement in interfaith activities more than tripled from 23.7% to 78.5%. Most significantly for sustainability, 82.2% of participants committed to continuing moderation work, and this commitment materialized: 91.7% of initiated movements remained active three months post-intervention an exceptionally high retention rate compared to typical community programs. The emergence of 33 participants (24.4%) as certified moderation facilitators created a second-generation cadre capable of replicating the intervention, while the multiplier effect reaching 425 additional millennials demonstrates organic diffusion beyond the original cohort. These findings collectively suggest that the intervention achieved not merely individual-level attitude change, but systemic transformation through creation of durable social structures (movements, facilitator networks) and cultural shifts (normalization of interfaith collaboration) capable of self-perpetuation and expansion.

Field observations recorded concrete behavioral changes such as increased willingness to interact with other religious groups, active participation in interfaith activities, and ability to mediate when sensitive religious issues arose. Qualitative data from follow-up interviews 3 months after the program ended showed encouraging sustainability. Of the 12 religious moderation movements, 11 movements or 91.7% remained active with support from various parties including religious leaders, village governments, and religious organizations. Another significant finding was the multiplier effect where program participants began replicating the dialogue and interfaith collaboration approach to other communities. A total of 33 participants became religious moderation facilitators in their respective communities, reaching an additional 425 millennials with similar approaches. A youth religious moderation movement coordination forum also formed spontaneously as a venue for sharing experiences and supporting program sustainability. Most encouragingly, 5 movements successfully obtained funding support from the district government and religious organizations for activity expansion.

Discussion

The dramatic increase in civic awareness of 73.8% and religious moderation index of 68.4% with highly significant statistical significance ($p < 0.001$) proves the effectiveness of a participatory approach based on interfaith dialogue [22]. This finding confirms Allport's contact hypothesis theory which states that positive contact between different groups under equal conditions can reduce prejudice and increase tolerance [10], [23], [24]. This program successfully created a safe space for millennials from various religions to interact meaningfully, share experiences, and build mutual understanding [25]. The participatory community engagement approach proved more effective than lecture or indoctrination methods because it provided direct experiences that transformed perceptions and attitudes profoundly. The mechanism of change operated through three interrelated pathways: cognitive restructuring (exposure to counter-stereotypical information during interfaith dialogue), affective bonding (development of positive emotions through collaborative activities), and behavioral habituation (repeated practice of tolerant interactions becoming internalized dispositions). Critically, the intervention succeeded because it addressed not merely individual attitudes but the social ecology by involving religious leaders, creating peer support networks, and establishing institutional structures, it embedded new norms within participants' everyday environments, thereby reducing reversion to prior exclusivist patterns.

The integration of Indramayu local wisdom as a basis for religious moderation learning provides important theoretical contributions to the contextualization approach of universal values [26]. The finding that 83% of participants knew tolerance practices in local wisdom without realizing their connection to religious moderation shows that moderation values have

actually been rooted in Indonesian culture. The inclusive "ngaji bareng" tradition, interfaith "rewang," and "nyaur" among believers are concrete manifestations of religious moderation practiced for generations [27]. When participants realized that religious moderation is not a foreign imported concept but a value that has lived in their culture, resistance decreased and acceptance increased dramatically [28]. This aligns with Geertz's research on the importance of cultural approaches in understanding religion and society. Theoretically, this finding advances our understanding of how universal normative frameworks (religious moderation) gain legitimacy and motivational force when anchored in particular cultural practices. Rather than positioning local and universal as opposing forces, this study demonstrates their productive synthesis: local wisdom provides the familiar, emotionally-resonant medium through which abstract principles become comprehensible and actionable. The pedagogical implication is profound—interventions seeking attitudinal change should begin not by introducing new concepts, but by illuminating how desired attitudes already exist latently within participants' cultural inheritance, thereby transforming external imposition into internal recognition.

The success of 12 religious moderation movements with a 91.7% sustainability rate is an extraordinary achievement exceeding initial expectations [29]. This sustainability rate is much higher than similar programs that generally experience decreased participation after intervention ends. The key success factor is collective cross-faith ownership, where programs are designed, managed, and collectively owned by participants from various religious backgrounds [19]. This interfaith collaboration model creates strong social bonds and shared commitment to maintain sustainability [30]. Support from moderate local religious leaders also became a determining factor, providing theological and social legitimacy to this moderation movement [31]. This finding enriches the literature on intergroup cooperation and shows that collaboration on concrete projects is more effective in building social cohesion than abstract dialogue alone.

The change in tolerance attitudes reaching 71.1% and increase in interfaith activity participation up to 78.5% shows fundamental transformation in millennials' perspectives and behaviors toward diversity [24]. Cross-visits to places of worship, initially viewed controversially by some participants, turned out to be the most memorable transformative moment. Direct experience witnessing worship of other religious groups, hearing explanations from their religious leaders, and feeling the hospitality of other believers shattered negative stereotypes that had been embedded [32]. This program proves that direct experience is far more powerful than lectures about tolerance, confirming experiential learning theory in the context of multicultural education and religious moderation.

Despite showing encouraging results, this program has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the composition of participants from minority religions (Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian) was only 8.9%, so their representation was not proportional to the real diversity in society. Second, impact evaluation was only conducted up to 3 months after the program, so long-term sustainability (1-2 years) still requires further research. Third, the program has not measured its impact on participants' resilience against radicalist narratives on social media, which remains an ongoing threat. Fourth, program focus on millennials already active in organizations may create selection bias, where those already having initial openness are easier to transform. Fifth, program scalability faces challenges because it requires intensive involvement of moderate interfaith religious leaders, who are not available in all areas.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that participatory interventions anchored in local wisdom can effectively transform civic awareness and religious moderation among millennials in religiously plural contexts. The seven-month program in Indramayu Regency achieved statistically significant improvements across all measured dimensions: civic awareness increased by 73.8% (from 52.8 to 91.7), religious moderation index by 68.4% (from 57.4 to 91.5), and tolerance

attitudes by 71.1% changes confirmed by paired sample t-test ($t = 21.35$; $p < 0.001$). Beyond individual attitudinal shifts, the intervention generated 12 interfaith collaborative movements with 91.7% sustainability rate after three months, reached 425 additional millennials through multiplier effects, and produced 33 certified facilitators capable of program replication.

The theoretical contribution lies in demonstrating how indigenous cultural practices serve as efficacious media for internalizing universal normative frameworks. By revealing that 83% of participants already unconsciously practiced tolerance through local traditions ("ngaji bareng," "rewang," "nyaur"), the study shows that effective moderation education requires not imposing external concepts but illuminating participants' existing cultural resources a pedagogical strategy more legitimate, emotionally resonant, and sustainable than top-down normative instruction. This finding advances contextualization theory by specifying mechanisms through which local and universal productively synthesize rather than oppose. Practically, this study offers policymakers and practitioners a replicable model for religious moderation programming in diverse Indonesian contexts and potentially other religiously plural societies. The four-stage implementation framework (assessment, interactive training, implementation mentoring, impact evaluation) provides actionable guidance, while the emphasis on local wisdom ensures cultural adaptability. The documented sustainability movements continuing organically, facilitators emerging spontaneously, impacts multiplying virally suggests that well-designed interventions can catalyze self-perpetuating social change rather than creating donor-dependent programs.

Recommendations for advancing this line of work include: (1) longitudinal research tracking participants over 2-3 years to assess long-term attitudinal stability and movement evolution, particularly examining factors predicting sustained versus diminished engagement; (2) experimental studies employing randomized controlled designs with comparison groups to strengthen causal inference and identify essential versus supplementary program components; (3) comparative research across diverse socio-religious contexts (urban/rural, majority/minority regions, different religious compositions) to test model transferability and identify boundary conditions; (4) development of scalable, lower-resource versions suitable for regions lacking intensive social capital and financial resources, potentially utilizing digital platforms and train-the-trainer cascades. In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence that Indonesia's millennial generation—often portrayed as vulnerable to radicalization possesses latent capacities for pluralistic citizenship that can be activated through culturally-grounded, participatory interventions. By building on indigenous wisdom rather than imposing foreign frameworks, and by empowering youth as agents rather than treating them as problems, programs can transform intolerance into collaboration, exclusivism into inclusivity, and passive apathy into active citizenship. The path to sustaining Indonesia's diversity lies not in suppressing differences but in cultivating mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation across them a goal achievable through strategic, evidence-based interventions as demonstrated here.

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