

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S TEACHING METHODS AS A STRATEGY FOR DERADICALIZATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract:

This study examines prophetic pedagogy derived from the educational practices of Prophet Muhammad SAW as a strategic framework for strengthening religious moderation and countering radicalism in contemporary Islamic education. Using a qualitative library research method, the study analyzes classical Islamic sources and recent scholarly publications from 2021–2025 to identify relevant pedagogical principles and their contemporary applications. The findings show that prophetic pedagogy is grounded in compassion (rahmah), wisdom (hikmah), justice ('adl), exemplary conduct (uswah), and dialogical interaction. These principles are closely aligned with humanistic and constructivist educational approaches that promote inclusive learning, critical reflection, and ethical responsibility. The study further reveals that the integration of prophetic pedagogical values into Islamic Religious Education can reduce learners' vulnerability to radical narratives by encouraging balanced religious understanding and peaceful social engagement. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to reconceptualizing prophetic pedagogy as a systematic educational framework rather than merely historical teaching practices. Practically, the results provide guidance for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing moderation-oriented learning models rooted in

Islamic values. The study concludes that prophetic pedagogy remains highly relevant as a transformative strategy for promoting peace, social cohesion, and Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin in contemporary society

Keywords: *Prophetic Pedagogy; Teaching Methods of the Prophet Muhammad; Religious Moderatio; Deradicalization; Islamic Education*

Introduction

Religious radicalism has increasingly been recognized as a serious challenge for Islamic education, both globally and within the Indonesian context. Various studies indicate that educational institutions may unintentionally become spaces where exclusivist and intolerant interpretations of religion are reproduced when learning emphasizes dogmatism over critical and ethical engagement¹. In response, Islamic education is required not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to cultivate values of moderation, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence that align with the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and national educational goals.²

In Indonesia, the discourse of religious moderation(Qolbi and Khoiroh 2025) has become a central policy agenda of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly in response to the vulnerability of students to radical narratives disseminated through digital media and informal religious networks.³ Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is therefore positioned as a strategic instrument for strengthening moderate religious understanding while simultaneously preventing radicalization through pedagogical transformation rather than securitization approaches alone.⁴

¹ Lynn Davies, *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos* (London: Routledge, 2018). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315122748>

² UNESCO, *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education* (Paris: UNESCO, 2021). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707>.

³ A. Hidayatullah, "Prophetic Teaching Methods and Religious Moderation in Islamic Education," *Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 9, no. 2 (2021): 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jies.2021.9.2.6890>.

⁴ S. Khairunnisa & A. Ramli, "Religious Moderation through Exemplary-Based Islamic Education," *Tarbiyatuna: Journal of Islamic Education* 15, no. 1 (2022): 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.20414/tarbiyatuna.v15i1.4567>.

Despite the growing body of research on deradicalization and religious moderation, many studies remain focused on curriculum content and institutional policy, with limited attention to pedagogical models rooted in Islamic epistemology itself.⁵ This gap suggests the need for an educational framework that integrates Islamic prophetic values with contemporary pedagogical theory, enabling Islamic education to address radicalism from within its own intellectual and moral tradition..

Prophetic pedagogy, derived from the educational practices of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, offers such a framework. Classical Islamic scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah emphasized education as a process of moral cultivation (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), character formation, and wisdom-oriented instruction rather than mere transmission of doctrinal knowledge.⁶ When recontextualized within modern educational discourse, prophetic pedagogy demonstrates strong resonance with humanistic, constructivist, and critical pedagogical approaches that prioritize learners' agency, empathy, and ethical responsibility.⁷

Accordingly, this article aims to analyze prophetic pedagogy as an educational strategy for strengthening religious moderation and supporting deradicalization efforts within Islamic education. The novelty of this study lies in its integrative analysis that connects prophetic educational values with contemporary theories of pedagogy and recent empirical research on radicalism prevention in education. By doing so, the article contributes theoretically to Islamic educational thought and practically to the development of moderation-oriented learning models in PAI.

Literature Review

Religious radicalism in educational institutions has become a major concern in contemporary studies on Islamic education. Several

⁵ J. Mark Halstead, "Islamic Values and Education in a Globalized World," *Journal of Moral Education* 50, no. 3 (2021): 345–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2020.1869478>

⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005). <https://archive.org/details/ihya-ulumuddin>

⁷ J. Mark Halstead, "Islamic Values and Education in a Globalized World," *Journal of Moral Education* 50, no. 3 (2021): 345–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2020.1869478>

scholars argue that radical tendencies may develop when learning processes emphasize dogmatism, rigid textualism, and one-way authority while neglecting critical thinking, dialogue, and ethical reflection. avies (2018) explains that education can either prevent conflict or reinforce ideological polarization depending on the pedagogical approach used. In Indonesia, Zuhdi (2021) states that religious moderation has become an important framework for maintaining harmony in a plural society, placing schools and universities in a strategic role to cultivate tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Likewise, Rahman, Zuhdi, and Arifin (2021) found that preventive educational approaches based on inclusive learning and critical literacy are more effective than purely security-based deradicalization efforts. These studies indicate that radicalism should be understood not only as a theological problem but also as a pedagogical challenge.

From the perspective of Islamic intellectual tradition, the educational practices of the Prophet Muhammad SAW provide a strong normative and practical foundation for addressing this challenge. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali ⁸(2005) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah⁹ (2011) describe prophetic teaching as a process of moral cultivation, spiritual refinement, and character formation rather than mere transmission of religious doctrine. The Prophet applied methods such as dialogue (hiwar), storytelling (qashash), exemplary conduct (uswah hasanah), consultation (shura), and gradual instruction according to learners' readiness. These methods demonstrate that prophetic education was compassionate, contextual, and learner-centered. Contemporary studies by Halstead ¹⁰(2021) and Hidayatullah ¹¹ (2021) further confirm that values such as justice, wisdom, empathy, and responsibility in prophetic pedagogy remain

⁸ Al-Ghazali, Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005. <https://archive.org/details/ihya-ulumuddin>.

⁹ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Zad al-Ma'ad fi Hadyi Khayr al-'Ibad, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 2011). <https://archive.org/details/zad-al-maad>.

¹⁰ J. Mark Halstead, "Islamic Values and Education in a Globalized World," *Journal of Moral Education* 50, no. 3 (2021): 345–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2020.1869478>.

¹¹ A. Hidayatullah, "Prophetic Teaching Methods and Religious Moderation in Islamic Education," *Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 9, no. 2 (2021): 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jies.2021.9.2.6890>.

highly relevant to modern educational discourse and religious moderation.

Although previous studies have discussed religious moderation and prophetic teaching methods separately, limited research has systematically connected prophetic pedagogy with deradicalization strategies in Islamic education. Most existing literature focuses on curriculum reform, policy implementation, or character education without positioning prophetic pedagogy as a coherent educational framework. In fact, prophetic pedagogy shows strong compatibility with humanistic and constructivist theories that emphasize learner participation, ethical growth, and contextual understanding. Therefore, this study fills the existing gap by synthesizing classical Islamic sources and recent scholarly literature to formulate prophetic pedagogy as an integrative strategy for strengthening religious moderation, preventing radical narratives, and promoting peaceful Islamic education in contemporary society.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative library research design with a conceptual-analytical approach. Data sources consist of primary classical Islamic texts related to prophetic education, including works by Al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, as well as secondary sources in the form of academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2021 and 2025.¹² The selection of sources prioritizes relevance to Islamic pedagogy, religious moderation, and deradicalization in educational contexts..

. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify core pedagogical values within prophetic educational practices and to compare these values with contemporary pedagogical theories and recent empirical findings on radicalism prevention in education.¹³ Analytical rigor was ensured through source triangulation and critical

¹² John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2018). <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/qualitative-inquiry-and-research-design/book246896>.

¹³ Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke, *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide* (London: SAGE Publications, 2021). <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/thematic-analysis/book248481>.

comparison across disciplines, including Islamic studies, educational theory, and policy-oriented research on religious moderation.

Result and Discussion

The findings of this study are derived from an in-depth analysis of classical Islamic sources and contemporary academic literature concerning prophetic pedagogy, religious moderation, and deradicalization in education. The results address the main objective of this research, namely to examine how the teaching methods of the Prophet Muhammad SAW can function as an effective pedagogical strategy to counter religious radicalism within Islamic education. The findings are organized into several subsections to provide a systematic and analytical discussion.

1. Conceptual Framework of Prophetic Pedagogy

Prophetic pedagogy refers to an educational approach derived from the teaching practices of the Prophet Muhammad SAW that emphasizes moral cultivation, compassion, wisdom, and contextualized instruction. Unlike transmissive models of education, prophetic pedagogy prioritizes the holistic development of learners by integrating cognitive, affective, and ethical dimensions of learning.¹⁴ This approach positions education as a transformative process aimed at shaping character (akhlaq) and social responsibility rather than merely conveying religious doctrines.

Recent studies highlight that prophetic pedagogy aligns closely with contemporary discussions on values-based education and character education, particularly in plural and multicultural societies.¹⁵ By foregrounding empathy, justice, and dialogical engagement, prophetic pedagogy provides a normative yet flexible framework capable of responding to challenges such as intolerance and religious radicalism in educational settings.

Table 1. Core Values of Prophetic Pedagogy

No	Core Value	Educational Meaning	Relevance to Moderation
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¹⁴ Mark Halstead, "Islamic Values and Education in a Globalized World," *Journal of Moral Education* 50, no. 3 (2021): 345–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2020.1869478>.

¹⁵ M. Zuhdi, "Religious Moderation and Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah* 59, no. 2 (2021): 353–380. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2021.592.353-380>.

1	Rahmah	Compassionate teaching and care for learners	Promotes tolerance
2	Hikmah	Contextual wisdom in instruction	Prevents rigid interpretations
3	‘Adl	Justice and fairness	Encourages balance
4	Uswah	Role modeling	Strengthens ethical behavior

2. Prophetic Pedagogy and Contemporary Educational Theory

When analyzed through the lens of modern pedagogical theory, prophetic pedagogy demonstrates strong convergence with humanistic and constructivist learning models. Humanistic pedagogy emphasizes learner-centeredness, self-actualization, and emotional development, all of which resonate with the Prophet’s emphasis on understanding learners’ conditions and capacities.¹⁶ Similarly, constructivist theory’s focus on meaning-making aligns with the prophetic practice of dialogical teaching and contextual problem-solving.

Comparative studies indicate that integrating prophetic pedagogy with contemporary educational theory enhances the relevance of Islamic education in addressing modern social challenges without compromising its theological foundations.¹⁷ This synthesis allows Islamic education to function as a space for critical reflection and ethical engagement rather than ideological indoctrination.

Table 2. Comparison between Prophetic Pedagogy and Modern Pedagogical Theories

Aspect	Prophetic Pedagogy	Humanistic Pedagogy	Constructivism
Learning focus	Moral–ethical growth	Personal growth	Knowledge construction

¹⁶ Lynn Davies, *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos* (London: Routledge, 2018). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315122748>

¹⁷ F. Rahman, M. Zuhdi, & S. Arifin, “Preventing Radicalism through Islamic Education. A pedagogical approach. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 12(3), 89–104 <https://www.jsser.org/index.php/jsser/article/view/3558>.

Teacher role	Moral exemplar	Facilitator	Learning guide
Learner role	Ethical agent	Self-directed learner	Active constructor

3. Prophetic Pedagogy as a Strategy for Religious Moderation

Religious moderation in Islamic education requires pedagogical strategies that counter exclusivist interpretations while maintaining theological integrity. Prophetic pedagogy offers such a strategy by emphasizing balance (wasatiyyah), dialogue, and social harmony as core educational values.¹⁸ Through these principles, learners are encouraged to engage with religious differences constructively rather than defensively.

Empirical research conducted over the past five years demonstrates that moderation-oriented pedagogy significantly reduces students' susceptibility to radical narratives, particularly when combined with critical thinking and ethical reasoning skills.¹⁹ Prophetic pedagogy operationalizes these findings by embedding moderation values directly into teaching practices rather than treating them as supplementary content.

Table 3. Mapping Prophetic Values to Religious Moderation
Indicators

Prophetic Value	Moderation Indicator	Educational Outcome
Rahmah	Tolerance	Respect for diversity
Hikmah	Anti-violence	Peaceful conflict resolution
‘Adl	Balance	Inclusive attitudes
Uswah	National commitment	Civic responsibility

4. Implications for Deradicalization in Islamic Education

¹⁸ A. Hidayatullah, "Prophetic Teaching Methods and Religious Moderation in Islamic Education," *Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 9, no. 2 (2021): 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jies.2021.9.2.6890>

¹⁹OECD, *Global Competence and Education for Peace* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264300002-en>.

Deradicalization within educational contexts necessitates preventive and formative approaches rather than reactive security measures. Recent studies suggest that pedagogical models grounded in ethical reasoning and critical engagement are more effective in addressing radicalism than content-based interventions alone.²⁰ Prophetic pedagogy contributes to this approach by fostering moral discernment and empathetic understanding among learners.

Comparative analysis of recent studies (2021–2025) indicates that prophetic pedagogy fills a critical gap in deradicalization research by providing an indigenous Islamic educational framework that aligns with global educational standards.²¹ This reinforces the argument that Islamic education can actively contribute to peace-building and social cohesion through pedagogical innovation.

Table 4. Integrative Framework of Prophetic Teaching Methods and Deradicalization in Islamic Education.

Prophetic Teaching Method	Core Pedagogical Principle	Moderation Indicator	Deradicalization Function
Exemplary conduct (uswah hasanah)	Role modeling and moral consistency	Non-violence	Internalization of peaceful and compassionate behavior
Dialogical interaction (hiwar)	Critical dialogue and reflection	Tolerance	Prevention of absolutist and rigid interpretations
Narrative learning (qashash)	Moral storytelling and contextualization	Balanced religious understanding	Reduction of literalism and ideological simplification
Practical demonstration	Experiential and contextual learning	National commitment	Application of religious values in social reality

²⁰ Lynn Davies, *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos* (London: Routledge, 2018). <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264300002-en>

²¹ J. Mark Halstead, “Islamic Values and Education in a Globalized World,” *Journal of Moral Education* 50, no. 3 (2021): 345–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2020.1869478>.

Consultation (shura)	Participatory and democratic learning	Acceptance of diversity	Development of inclusive and non- authoritarian attitudes
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The framework in Table 1 demonstrates that prophetic pedagogy operates not only at the instructional level but also at the ideological level by shaping learners' religious orientations. Compared with previous studies, which often discuss prophetic methods as traditional instructional techniques, this study positions them as strategic instruments within an international deradicalization and peace education discourse.

The implications suggest the need for curriculum redesign, teacher professional development, and assessment models that prioritize character formation alongside academic achievement. Such alignment is consistent with global recommendations on education for peace, citizenship, and prevention of violent extremism.²²

Future research may focus on empirical implementation of prophetic pedagogy in formal educational institutions to measure its effectiveness in reducing radical attitudes among students

Conclusion

This study concludes that prophetic pedagogy, derived from the educational practices of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, possesses strong theoretical and practical relevance as an educational strategy for strengthening religious moderation and supporting deradicalization efforts within Islamic education. By emphasizing compassion (rahmah), wisdom (hikmah), justice ('adl), and exemplary conduct (uswah), prophetic pedagogy offers a holistic educational model that integrates cognitive understanding, ethical formation, and social responsibility. Such an approach addresses the roots of radicalism not merely as an ideological deviation, but as a pedagogical failure to cultivate balanced and empathetic religious understanding.

The findings demonstrate that prophetic pedagogy aligns closely with contemporary educational theories, including humanistic and constructivist pedagogy, as well as with global and national

²² UNESCO, *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education* (Paris: UNESCO, 2021).
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707>.

frameworks on values-based education and religious moderation. This convergence confirms that Islamic educational traditions are not incompatible with modern pedagogical discourse; rather, they provide an indigenous epistemological foundation for moderation-oriented and peace-promoting education. In the Indonesian context, prophetic pedagogy supports the Ministry of Religious Affairs' agenda on religious moderation by translating policy values into concrete classroom practices.

The theoretical implication of this study lies in its contribution to Islamic educational thought by positioning prophetic pedagogy as a coherent pedagogical framework rather than a collection of normative teaching anecdotes. Practically, the study offers guidance for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers to integrate prophetic values into learning objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment models in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Such integration can strengthen learners' resilience against radical narratives and foster inclusive religious identities.

Future research is recommended to empirically test the effectiveness of prophetic pedagogy-based learning models across different educational levels and institutional settings. Mixed-method and experimental studies would further enrich understanding of how prophetic pedagogy operates in practice and how it may be adapted to digital and blended learning environments. Overall, prophetic pedagogy should be understood not only as a historical legacy, but as a transformative educational strategy capable of contributing to peace, social cohesion, and the realization of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin in contemporary society.

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