



Evaluation of Behaviorism Learning Based on Wasathiyah Values

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ABSTRACT

This research was motivated by the prevalence of less moderate student behaviors, such as the decline of tolerance and the increasing tendency toward group egocentrism within the school environment. As a solution, this article proposed an integration model for evaluating Islamic Religious Education learning based on behavioristic habituation to internalize wasathiyah (religious moderation) values. This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive field study method, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that the implementation of habituation-based evaluation instruments through reward, punishment, and environmental conditioning mechanisms contributed to shaping students' behaviors and moral practices in a structured manner. Positive impacts were observed in the improvement of individual discipline and the quality of students' social interactions. The study concluded that although behavioristic-based evaluation was effective in developing external behavioral habits during the initial stages, this model had limitations because it did not fully address students' intrinsic awareness and internal value formation. Therefore, achieving long-term effectiveness requires integration with more reflective and humanistic approaches to value development.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary educational landscape faces increasingly complex challenges related to character degradation, social polarization, and declining tolerance among younger generations (Bilkis et al., 2025; Herak, 2025; Kandia et al., 2026; Syahriani & Jannah, 2025; Triantoro & Shodiqin, 2026). In many countries, educational institutions are no longer responsible solely for transferring knowledge and academic competencies but also play a strategic role in developing ethical awareness, respect for diversity, and social responsibility. Globalization, digital transformation, and the rapid dissemination of information have intensified interactions among individuals from diverse cultural, religious, and social backgrounds (Abernathy, 2025; Manara & Weber, 2023; Rao, 2025; Yeasmin, 2024). However, these developments have also generated challenges, including the spread of intolerance, identity-based conflicts, and resistance to pluralistic values. According to UNESCO (2021), education plays a fundamental role in promoting global citizenship, peacebuilding, and respect for diversity because schools serve as important spaces for shaping students' perspectives and social behaviors. Therefore, strengthening moderate character education has become an essential agenda within contemporary educational systems.

The issue of religious moderation and tolerance has received increasing global attention due to the emergence of social fragmentation and identity-based tensions. The World Values Survey (2022) indicates that social trust and acceptance of differences remain significant challenges in several societies, particularly those characterized by religious and cultural diversity. Similarly, the Institute for Economics and Peace (2023) reported that conflicts associated with ideological and identity differences continue to affect global peace conditions. Within educational contexts, these challenges are reflected in students' attitudes toward differences, peer interactions, and responses to diverse perspectives (Lin et al., 2025; Ramadan Elbaïoumi Shaddad & Jember, 2024; Trolan & Parker III, 2022; Wentzel, 2022). In Indonesia, as a multicultural country consisting of various ethnic groups, cultures, and religions, maintaining social harmony through education is highly significant. Previous studies have highlighted that strengthening religious moderation in schools is essential for preventing intolerance and developing students' capacity to appreciate diversity (Shofyan, 2024).

Specifically, educational institutions face challenges in transforming religious moderation values from theoretical understanding into students' daily behaviors. Although concepts such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), justice (*i'tidal*), balance (*tawazun*), and respect for differences have been introduced through religious and character education, their application in students' social interactions remains inconsistent. Existing challenges include declining tolerance, increasing group exclusivity, and limited acceptance of differing viewpoints. These conditions indicate that education should not only focus on cognitive achievement but also emphasize systematic strategies for developing moderate attitudes and behaviors. Previous research has emphasized that integrating *wasathiyah* values into learning practices is important for creating inclusive, balanced, and harmonious school environments (Aluf et al., 2024).

One theoretical perspective that supports the internalization of moderate behavior is behaviorism learning theory. Behaviorism emphasizes that human behavior can be shaped through systematic interactions involving stimuli, responses, reinforcement, and environmental conditioning. In educational contexts, this theory provides practical mechanisms for developing desirable behaviors through habituation, rewards, consequences, and continuous reinforcement. Previous studies have demonstrated that behavioristic approaches contribute to character formation because repeated positive experiences can gradually establish behavioral patterns among learners (Pratama, 2019; Damayanti & Siraj, 2021). In relation to Islamic education, behaviorism provides an applicable framework for translating abstract moral values into observable behaviors, enabling teachers to monitor and strengthen students' character development.

Several previous studies have investigated the relationship between behavioristic learning approaches and character development. Hadi and Sari (2023) examined the implementation of behavioristic learning theory in Islamic Religious Education and found that stimulus-response mechanisms supported students' learning behaviors. Similarly, Fakhriah et al. (2026), through a systematic literature review, identified that behavioristic principles contribute significantly to Islamic education, particularly through habituation and reinforcement strategies. Research by Ridwan and Mahmudi (2023) also emphasized that educational processes can serve as instruments for internalizing *wasathiyah* values through continuous evaluation and behavioral monitoring. These studies demonstrate the relevance of behaviorism and religious moderation education; however, most previous studies have

examined behavioristic learning implementation and religious moderation education separately rather than investigating evaluation mechanisms that integrate both concepts.

Despite increasing research attention, several research gaps remain. First, previous studies have primarily examined behaviorism as a learning strategy, while limited attention has been given to its role as an evaluation framework for measuring the internalization of moderation values. Second, existing research tends to emphasize observable behavioral changes without sufficiently examining how evaluation processes identify the consistency and sustainability of students' moderate attitudes. Third, studies on wasathiyah education often focus on conceptual understanding or instructional implementation, whereas the assessment dimension concerning how these values are monitored and strengthened remains underexplored. Therefore, comprehensive investigation is required to understand how behaviorism-based learning evaluation contributes to shaping and measuring students' moderate behaviors.

The urgency of this research is based on the need for educational evaluation systems that assess not only academic achievement but also character transformation. Conventional evaluation approaches frequently emphasize cognitive outcomes, whereas character education requires continuous observation of attitudes, interactions, and behavioral development. A behaviorism-based learning evaluation model provides opportunities for educators to identify behavioral changes through observable indicators, reinforcement strategies, and systematic feedback mechanisms. Through such evaluation, teachers can determine whether students merely understand moderation values conceptually or demonstrate these values through consistent daily practices.

The novelty of this research lies in integrating behavioristic learning principles with the evaluation of wasathiyah values as a framework for character development. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss behaviorism as a learning approach or religious moderation as a moral concept, this study positions evaluation as a strategic mechanism connecting learning stimuli, behavioral responses, and value internalization. This perspective provides a broader understanding of how evaluation can function not only as an assessment instrument but also as a pedagogical process that strengthens students' moderate character. The integration of behavioral observation, reinforcement, and reflective understanding offers a more comprehensive perspective for developing sustainable character education.

This research aims to examine the role of behaviorism-based learning evaluation in controlling, measuring, and strengthening students' moderate attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, this study investigates how stimuli, habituation, reinforcement, and evaluation mechanisms contribute to the internalization of wasathiyah values within educational environments. By exploring these processes, this research seeks to provide deeper insights into the relationship between learning evaluation practices and character formation. The findings are expected to contribute to discussions on Islamic education psychology, character education, and innovative evaluation strategies.

The contribution of this research is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of educational evaluation literature by explaining how behavioristic principles support the measurement and strengthening of religious moderation values. Practically, the findings provide guidance for teachers, schools, and educational policymakers in designing evaluation systems that integrate behavioral assessment with

character development. Ultimately, this research highlights that evaluation should not be limited to measuring students' knowledge but should also function as a continuous mechanism for cultivating tolerance, justice, balance, and respect for diversity. Therefore, this study contributes to strengthening educational practices that promote moderate, inclusive, and socially responsible learners.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a literature review design (library research) to examine the role of behaviorism-based learning evaluation in the internalization of *wasathiyah* values within educational settings. The data sources consisted of scientific publications related to behavioristic learning theory, Islamic Religious Education, learning evaluation, character education, and religious moderation. Relevant articles, books, and scholarly documents were selected from academic databases, including Google Scholar and Scopus-indexed journals, using purposive sampling based on relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research objectives.

Data were collected through a systematic literature review process involving source identification, screening, critical evaluation, data extraction, and thematic categorization. A review protocol was used to organize the analysis based on key themes, including behavioristic learning implementation, evaluation mechanisms, and the internalization of *wasathiyah* values. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation by comparing information from multiple references, while consistency was ensured through systematic coding and repeated examination of the selected literature.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analysis involved identifying key concepts, categorizing themes, examining relationships among findings, and interpreting the role of behaviorism-based evaluation in strengthening students' moderate character. Reference management software such as Mendeley was used to organize citations and research materials. The research procedure consisted of four stages: literature identification, source selection, data analysis, and interpretation of findings. Through this process, the study explored how stimulus, habituation, reinforcement, and evaluation mechanisms within behaviorism contributed to the formation and sustainability of *wasathiyah* values among students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study conducted, the implementation of behaviorism-based learning in the formation of *wasathiyah* character takes place through strategies that emphasize the relationship between stimulus, response, habituation, and behavior strengthening. Teachers not only convey the values of religious moderation at a conceptual level, but also develop a learning environment that allows students to experience and practice directly tolerant, polite, disciplined, fair, and respectful of differences. The learning environment is thus positioned as a pedagogical space that provides stimulus consistently while providing opportunities for students to show behavioral responses in accordance with *wasathiyah values*.

This pattern shows that the formation of *wasathiyah* character is not a process that takes place instantly, but develops through concrete experiences, repetition, and reinforcement that is carried out on an ongoing basis. Positive behaviors that appear in learning interactions are

strengthened to become habits, while inappropriate behaviors are directed through reprimands or consequences that are educational in nature. Thus, the principle of behaviorism provides a practical framework for teachers in transforming the values of religious moderation from mere knowledge to real behavior that is reflected in daily life in the school environment.

One of the dominant strategies is the application of rewards and punishments as a form of behavior reinforcement. Teachers provide positive reinforcement in the form of verbal praise, appreciation, and the addition of academic points to students who show behavior in accordance with wasatiyah values, such as respecting the opinions of friends, being polite, helping others, and being able to work with students from different backgrounds. On the other hand, when there is a violation of the norms of discipline and togetherness, teachers provide educational consequences, including verbal reprimands, reflective tasks, or memorization of short verses. This pattern shows the application of the principle of operant conditioning, which is the tendency of a behavior to be maintained when it is reinforced and corrected when it causes certain consequences (Damayanti and Siraj 2021).

In addition to reinforcement and consequences, behavior formation is carried out through consistent habituation. Schools develop a number of routine activities, such as the culture of shaking hands and saying greetings, joint prayers before learning, the reading of the holy verses of the Qur'an, and mutual cooperation activities involving students from various groups. These activities function as a stimulus that is given repeatedly so that positive responses slowly become habits. In the perspective of behaviorism, consistency and repetition have an important position because behaviors that are constantly practiced in relatively the same situation have a greater chance of becoming a sedentary pattern of behavior. These findings are in line with the research of Fakhriah et al. (2026) who show that habituation carried out systematically can support character formation through the reinforcement of positive behaviors.

The implementation of wasatiyah values is also seen in social interaction during the learning process, especially when students are involved in discussions and group work. Teachers pay attention to students' ability to listen to other people's opinions, accept differing views, convey arguments politely, and resolve differences without conflict. In this context, the values of tolerance and balance are not only taught as learning materials, but are realized through concrete social experiences. This process shows that character learning becomes more meaningful when students have the opportunity to practice values in real situations, while teachers act as a stimulus giver as well as a reinforcement of expected behavioral responses.

In the evaluation aspect, teachers no longer only rely on written exams that are oriented towards cognitive achievement, but also use direct behavioral observation. Teachers observe the dynamics of student interaction during learning activities, especially when there are group discussions, cooperation, and other social activities. These observations are used to determine the extent to which students are able to show tolerant behavior, respect differences, discipline, and responsibility. Thus, evaluation functions not only as a tool for measuring learning outcomes, but also as an instrument to determine behavioral changes that are indicators of the achievement of wasatiyah values.

The evaluation of these behaviors is strengthened through attitude assessments that are carried out in a more structured manner. Teachers use affective assessment rubrics and parent liaison books to obtain a more holistic picture of student character development. Parental

involvement is important because the behaviors formed at school need to be consistently strengthened in the family environment. With communication between teachers and parents, changes in student behavior can be monitored continuously, so that the evaluation process does not stop at assessment in the classroom. These findings show that learning evaluation can function as a feedback mechanism to reinforce positive behavior while providing intervention when behavior is found that is not in accordance with the expected values.

The implementation of these strategies shows changes in students' daily behavior. Field data show a tendency to increase discipline, decrease emotional friction between students, and grow respectful and friendly attitudes towards teachers and friends who have different backgrounds. These findings indicate that consistent reinforcement of behaviors and habituation can contribute to the formation of moderate character. From the perspective of behaviorism, these changes can be understood as the result of a stimulus-response process that takes place repeatedly and is reinforced through the educational environment (Fakhriah et al. 2026). Thus, evaluation has a strategic position because it allows teachers to know whether the stimulus and reinforcement provided really produce the expected behavioral change.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness of behavioristic approaches needs to be critically understood. Approaches that overemphasize seemingly behaviors have the potential to result only in external compliance, while aspects of inner awareness, intrinsic motivation, and a deep understanding of the moral and religious reasons behind an action do not necessarily develop proportionately. Excessive reliance on rewards can cause students to do good in the expectation of appreciation, while dominant punishment can shape obedience out of fear. Therefore, behaviorism should be placed as one of the pedagogical strategies, not as the only approach in character education. In the context of *wasatiyah* education, a behavioristic approach needs to be combined with cognitive, affective, and spiritual approaches so that behavior change does not stop at outward obedience, but develops into value awareness, moral maturity, and internal commitment to apply the principles of tolerance, justice, balance, and respect for diversity in daily life (Hidayat, Fauzan, and Yarni 2025; Hadi and Sari 2023).

However, the effectiveness of behavioristic approaches needs to be critically understood. Too strong an emphasis on observable behaviors has the potential to result in external compliance, while aspects of inner awareness, intrinsic motivation, and a deep understanding of the moral and religious underpinnings of an action do not necessarily develop proportionately. Dependence on *rewards* can encourage students to do good because they expect appreciation, while the predominantly use of *punishment* risks forming obedience based on fear. Therefore, behaviorism needs to be placed as one of the pedagogical strategies and not as the only approach in character education. In the context of *wasatiyah* education, a behavioristic approach needs to be combined with cognitive, affective, and spiritual approaches so that behavior change does not stop at outward obedience, but develops into value awareness, moral maturity, and internal commitment to apply the principles of tolerance, justice, balance, and respect for diversity in daily life (Hidayat, Fauzan, and Yarni 2025; Hadi and Sari 2023).

The integration of these approaches requires a more comprehensive evaluation of learning. Evaluation is not enough directed to find out whether students have shown behavior that is in accordance with *the wasatiyah* indicators, but also needs to reveal the reason, understanding, and awareness underlying the behavior. Teachers can combine behavioral observation with reflection, dialogue, self-assessment, and peer assessment to get a more

complete picture of the student's character development. In this way, evaluation can serve as a diagnostic as well as a pedagogical process that helps teachers find out whether moderate behavior has developed into a habit supported by personal understanding and awareness.

Ultimately, the formation of *wasatiyah* character requires a continuous process and cannot be measured only through short-term behavioral changes. Behavioristic habituation and reinforcement are important foundations for forming positive behavior patterns, but their sustainability is largely determined by the ability of education to foster students' internal awareness. When tolerant, fair, balanced, and respectful behavior of differences has been supported by cognitive understanding and spiritual awareness, *the value of wasatiyah* is no longer just a rule that must be obeyed, but rather develops into a principle that is believed in and becomes part of the student's character. Thus, the success of *wasatiyah* education can be seen not only from compliance with school rules, but from the ability of students to bring these values into various social life contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that behaviorism-based learning evaluation played an important role in strengthening students' *wasathiyah* character through systematic processes involving stimuli, responses, habituation, reinforcement, and behavioral assessment. The integration of behavioristic principles into learning evaluation enabled educators to identify, measure, and reinforce observable behaviors associated with religious moderation, including tolerance, justice (*i'tidal*), balance (*tawazun*), respect for differences, and responsible social interaction. The findings indicated that evaluation functioned not only as a tool for measuring academic achievement but also as a pedagogical mechanism for monitoring character development and providing appropriate reinforcement to support continuous behavioral improvement. However, this study also highlighted that behavioristic approaches had limitations because behavioral changes resulting from external reinforcement did not always reflect internal awareness and deeper value understanding. Therefore, the development of moderate character requires integration between behavioral habituation and cognitive, affective, reflective, and spiritual approaches to ensure that *wasathiyah* values become internalized principles rather than temporary behavioral patterns.

Future research should conduct empirical studies across broader educational settings, diverse levels of education, and through mixed-method approaches to examine the long-term effectiveness of behaviorism-based evaluation in developing students' moderate character. Further studies may also develop standardized evaluation instruments that integrate behavioral observation with self-reflection, peer assessment, and affective measurement to capture both observable behaviors and internal value awareness. Such investigations are expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how learning evaluation contributes to sustainable character education and supports the formation of students who demonstrate tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity across various social contexts.

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