Educational Experiences in Religious Moderation at Indonesian Islamic Universities: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

Radicalization has entered the realm of education. Fundamentalist doctrines and movements have prepared students as their successors. Campuses are used as a medium for transnational ideologies to enter, which results in the rejection of the Pancasila ideology. Students with minimal religious knowledge are the main targets. This study aims to explore how religious moderation is actualized and strengthened among students of the State Islamic University (UIN) Jurai Siwo Lampung and the Islamic Institute of Islamic Religion Sunan Giri Ponorogo in responding to the increasing concerns of the influence of radicalism in higher education. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data is collected through in-depth interviews with college leaders, from the Chancellor to the Chair of the Study Program and its staff, as well as active students. In addition, observations were made on the understanding and attitude of religious moderation and the study of campus documentation. The findings reveal two primary modes of religious moderation implementation: (1) formal integration through curriculum content and the establishment of religious moderation centers, and (2) informal or hidden curriculum through cross-course character formation and lecturer role modeling. These efforts reflect a strategic response to preserve inclusive Islamic values and counter extremist narratives. The study recommends institutionalizing religious moderation pedagogies to support the vision of Islam as a religion of peace and compassion.

Keywords: Radicalism, Religious Moderation, Educational Experiences

INTRODUCTION

Religion, violence, and social conflict have a complex relationship that cannot be understood unilaterally. McClymond (2022) emphasized that religion is not solely a source of violence but also offers peaceful solutions. Rubio-Ramos (2024) showed that violence undermines social capital, especially when the perpetrators cannot be identified, thus exacerbating social disintegration. Meanwhile, Stan, Vancea, & Zaharia (2023) revealed that the role of religion in conflict depends on institutional attitudes and changes with migration and crisis conditions. All three emphasized the importance of a contextual approach in understanding the dynamics of religion and violence. These attitudes are carried out by groups of people both in the real world and online. Not only in Indonesia, but several countries around the world have experienced groups of people who behave exclusively, explosively, and intolerantly in the name of religion. This has given rise to the perception that Islam is a harsh, rigid, and aggressive religion. Muslims are an extreme group, primitive and barbaric (Naeem, 2022). This understanding is of course not in accordance with the true nature of Islam, namely a religion that brings peace to its followers.

Rather than correcting misconceptions about Islam, radical groups are targeting high school and college students for spreading radicalism. This is evidenced by the findings of

several studies, including one conducted by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) on state universities. 25% of students and 21% of lecturers stated that Pancasila was irrelevant, while 84.8% of students and 76.2% of lecturers agreed with the implementation of Islamic law. Alvara's findings indicate that intolerant groups have infiltrated the workplace, campus Islamic outreach organizations, and religious activities in schools (Chadidjah et al., 2021). The arrest of a suspected terrorist alumnus of the University of Riau (UNRI), along with the discovery of four homemade bombs, a bow, and an air rifle during a raid by the National Police's Densus 88 Anti-terror unit at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (Fisipol) student building on June 2, 2018. The State Intelligence Agency (BIN) found that seven popular universities were exposed to radicalism, and that 39% of students in 15 provinces were interested in radicalism (Aziz & Najmudin, 2020).

The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) has mapped the level of radicalism in Indonesia at alert (66.3%), dangerous (15.4%), and cautious (20.3%). At this level, students are considered cautious (Al Ansori et al., 2021). Based on the BNPT's mapping, the spread of radicalism in Lampung province is categorized as dangerous. In the field, there have been at least eight arrests of suspected terrorists during the critical period from 2019 to 2023. The suspected terrorists are affiliated with the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) group and the Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) network, which pledged allegiance to ISIS. The locations of the arrests include; Bandar Lampung (4 cases), Pesawaran (2 cases), Pringsewu (1 case), and Central Lampung Regency (1 case) (Rachmawati, 2023). Another fact is that fundamentalists who entered the University of Lampung were not oriented towards radicalism, but rather entered the realm of tarbiyah (education) and siyasah (politics). They have prepared students as the next generation (Mustofa et al., 2019). In Ponorogo, from digital traces in 2017, Densus 88 Anti-terror arrested HW as a suspected terrorist in the Balong area (Jalil, 2017). Furthermore, in 2019, BTK was also arrested by Densus 88 Anti-terror while on his way to Ponorogo (Rachmawati, 2023). The fact of radicalism in Lampung and Ponorogo is interesting for researchers to conduct further research related to the understanding of religious moderation among students in the two regions.

Higher education, as an academic institution, plays a strategic role in shaping the mindset of the younger generation, including in terms of religiosity (Wenas & Verana, 2025). On the other hand, these institutions are also vulnerable to the infiltration of extreme ideologies, whether through student organizations, religious activities, or digital social networks (Kanafi et al., 2024). This situation highlights the importance of strengthening moderate religious values on campus. Religious moderation, as a religious attitude that balances commitment to faith and respect for differences (Ahmad, 2021), is a relevant approach. However, efforts to actualize it on campus often face challenges such as differences in institutional approaches, diverse student backgrounds, and ideological pressures from outside the campus (Hartati et al., 2023).

"Religious Moderation" has officially become the slogan of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in all work programs and policies since 2019. This slogan was reinforced by the instruction of the Director General of Islamic Higher Education at the Ministry of Religious Affairs to all rectors of Islamic religious universities in Indonesia to establish houses of religious moderation (Hefni, 2020). This aims to foster a moderate mindset in Indonesian society and address the spread of radicalism among students (Natanael & Ramdani, 2021). Therefore, religious moderation is crucial for Indonesians to understand and implement.

Extremist behavior in religion often arises from misunderstandings in interpreting religious teachings (Kriger & Seng, 2005; McClymond, 2022). This is inseparable from human nature as creatures with limitations in understanding the essence of truth and God's infinite knowledge (Cornish-Bowden & Cárdenas, 2020; Hoffman, 2020). These limitations give rise to diverse interpretations of religious texts, which, if not addressed wisely, can develop into intolerant and even radical attitudes. Therefore, it is crucial for each individual to not only strive to understand their religious teachings comprehensively but also to allow space for differences in interpretation and beliefs among others.

In this context, religious moderation serves as an important framework for managing diversity in a pluralistic society. Religious moderation is understood as a religious attitude that balances personal commitment to religion and respect for the beliefs of others (Arifinsyah et al., 2020; Huriani et al., 2022; Husna & Thohir, 2020; Kamali, 2015; Kawangung, 2019). This balance is characterized by a just attitude in combining revelation and reason and exercising rights and obligations proportionally. Riddell in Faiz & Fadlan (2022) states that the main characteristics of moderation are openness to the views of others and an attitude of respect for differences, as Wahbah Zuhaili emphasized the importance of balance in attitudes, beliefs, behavior, and social relations (Saifudin, 2019).

Theologically, moderation in Islam is deeply rooted in the values of the Quran, which emphasize the principles of justice, balance, and avoiding excess Khoiri (2023); Salmah et al. (2022), and is exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad in his social practices. In the context of Indonesian Islamic thought, scholars have formulated five main characteristics of religious moderation (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021; Khasanah et al., 2023; Munandar & Amin, 2023; Subchi et al., 2022): peaceful and non-violent preaching; alignment with modern values such as human rights and democracy; rationality in understanding teachings; contextual understanding of sacred texts; and the use of ijtihad in responding to contemporary issues.

However, previous studies have generally focused on the conceptual-normative level, and few have explored the actual dynamics of the implementation of religious moderation at the grassroots level, particularly in the context of societies facing challenges such as identity polarization, global cultural pressures, and the influence of digital media (Rohadi & Ardhya, 2025). Furthermore, there are still few studies analyzing how the values of moderation are understood, internalized, and practiced by individuals and local communities, and how education, culture, and social experience influence them (Halik, 2023).

Therefore, this research is important and relevant for enriching the literature on religious moderation with a contextual and empirical approach that captures the social and cultural realities on the ground. This research not only seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice but also makes a concrete contribution to strengthening inclusive, peaceful, and adaptive religious attitudes amidst the dynamics of increasingly pluralistic and complex societal life.

The purpose of this study is to examine the actualization of religious moderation in Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. From an academic perspective, higher education institutions have the authority to develop religious moderation, but they vary in their methods of actualizing it. This difference in approach raises an important question: do various methods of actualization produce the same outcomes in fostering moderate religious attitudes among students, or do they produce varying impacts?

This research offers a relatively new contribution to the study of the relationship between religion, society, and education. Previous studies on these three issues have generally been framed in terms of tolerance, pluralism, or even democracy. For example, Sutrisno (2019) work in "Actualization of Religious Moderation in Educational Institutions"; Anwar & Muhayati (2021) work in "Efforts to Build an Attitude of Religious Moderation Through Islamic Religious Education for Students in Higher Education". Waseso & Sekarinasih (2021) in Religious Moderation as a Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education. Yuliani (2022) in Curriculum Management in the Framework of Religious Moderation in the Digital Era at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah Ulil Absar IAIN Ponorogo. Nevertheless, this research is a continuation and complement to research that connects Islamic education with pluralism and tolerance.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design Burke & Christensen (2020); Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014) to explore the experiences of students, lecturers, and policymakers at Islamic universities in actualizing religious moderation. The study was conducted at two Islamic universities Islamic State University Jurai Siwo Lampung and INSURI Ponorogo selected based on their diverse locations (urban and semi-rural) curriculum approaches (explicit and hidden) and differing statuses as a state institution and a

438

private institution. A combination of sampling techniques was employed: purposive sampling was used to select key informants (students, lecturers, and campus officials related to religious moderation), while random sampling was applied to select focus group discussion participants to reduce bias. The number of informants was determined using the principle of data saturation, with a total of 110 participants: 96 students, 10 lecturers, and 4 policymakers.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews (15 questions based on four indicators of religious moderation from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs: national commitment, anti-violence, tolerance, and accommodating local culture), participant observation of campus religious activities, and institutional documentation (curriculum, policies, and literature). Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña—including manual reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Validity and reliability were maintained through data triangulation, member checking, contextual descriptions, audit trails, and reflective notes to maintain objectivity and confirmability of the results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Various responses among universities in response to the government's policy to establish a house of religious moderation (Musyafak et al., 2021). This is done because of the diversity of academic and social considerations of each Islamic religious university. The researchers selected two samples of Islamic universities : Islamic State University Jurai Siwo Lampung and INSURI Ponorogo. Selected based on their diverse locations (urban and semi-rural), curriculum approaches (explicit and hidden) and differing statuses as a state institution and a private institution. The research results are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Observation Results of Religious Moderation Education at UIN Jurai Siwo Lampung

Indicators	Main Findings	Minor Notes
National Commitment	The majority obeys rules and mutual cooperation; rejects the formalization of Islamic law.	A small percentage agrees with formal sharia law
Tolerance	High (100% greet and respond to each other, the majority are non-discriminatory in friendships).	A small percentage choose strict friends.
Anti-Violence	Very high, conflicts are resolved through dialogue.	There have been cases of friendship conflicts.
Accommodating Local Culture	Almost equal in following and not following customs; tend to agree with local culture in places of worship.	Some reject culture that conflicts with religion.

Based on Table 1, in terms of national commitment, the majority of students demonstrated compliance with state laws and regulations and involvement in social activities such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong). This reflects an awareness of their responsibilities as citizens, although a small minority still support the formalization of Islamic law, indicating an exclusive discourse that needs to be addressed through national education. In terms of tolerance, student attitudes were very high, with all respondents greeting their interfaith friends and responding positively to conversations. However, a small minority tended to be selective in choosing friends, indicating caution in building social relationships. Furthermore, in terms of the anti-violence indicator, students consistently emphasized conflict resolution through dialogue, deliberation, and mediation, confirming the campus's success in fostering peaceful resolution. However, a small minority still engaged in friendship conflicts and even became provocateurs, so social dynamics still require management. Finally, in terms of accommodating local culture, students were quite open to local culture, both through participation in traditional ceremonies and accepting houses of worship with local cultural characteristics. However, there was ambivalence toward cultures perceived as contradictory to religious teachings, so dialogue between religious and cultural values needs to be continuously facilitated.

439

Table 2. Observation Results of Religious Moderation Education at INSURI Ponorogo

Indicators	Main Findings	Minor Notes
National Commitment	Students demonstrate their love for their country through their respect for Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, active participation in mutual cooperation, and maintaining tolerance in worship.	A small percentage agree with the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia, while others oppose it, citing diversity.
Tolerance	Students are open to social interactions, do not discriminate against friends, believe that all religions practice goodness, and respond to greetings in a friendly manner.	There were no significant differences; all respondents were unanimous (100%).
Anti-Violence	Students resolve problems through deliberation, forgiveness, and mediation in conflicts.	Some students have experienced conflict within organizations, work, or misunderstandings.
Accommodating Local Culture	Students support places of worship with local culture and actively participate in traditional ceremonies; they respect cultures that do not conflict with their religion.	Attitudes toward cultures perceived as conflicting vary: avoidance, understanding, gradual change, or continued respect.

Observations at INSURI Ponorogo in Table 2 indicate that students have a strong national commitment through respect for Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, adherence to regulations, and active participation in mutual cooperation, although there are minor views regarding the implementation of Islamic law that give rise to differences in attitudes. In terms of tolerance, all students consistently demonstrate an open attitude, do not discriminate against friends, and believe that every religion teaches goodness. In terms of anti-violence indicators, students prefer deliberation, peaceful communication, and the role of mediator, although a small number have been involved in conflicts in organizations or work. Meanwhile, in terms of accommodating local culture, students support cultural preservation through participation in traditional ceremonies and the use of local culture in places of worship, with minor variations in attitudes toward culture that is considered contrary to religious teachings. Overall, these findings indicate that INSURI Ponorogo students have internalized the values of religious moderation quite well, although there are still dynamics of thought that reflect the process of negotiation between religion, nationality, and culture.

Interviews with policymakers, lecturers, and students revealed at least six key points regarding the understanding and importance of strengthening religious moderation: *First*, religious moderation and religious teachings are closely related. By understanding the essence of religious teachings, individuals (in this case, students) will develop a sense of attitude and how to implement their religious teachings in their daily lives. Once students have mastered the essence of religious teachings, they will automatically develop a sense of respect for others and a willingness to seek a middle ground.

Two: Understanding religious moderation is a necessity that should be practiced by lecturers, students, and policymakers in higher education. This understanding is crucial for students as they engage directly in community life. The positive impacts of religious moderation include fostering mutual respect, increased tolerance, and trust among students.

Three; Religious moderation arose from erroneous attitudes and understandings of religious doctrine. This is reinforced by the emergence of various movements (conflicts and violence) in the name of religion in Indonesia. Therefore, an integral approach to understanding the Qur'an as a source of Islamic law is needed, and how to implement it in daily life. The acts of radicalism and terrorism that characterize religious life in Indonesia are a major reason for recognizing the importance of balancing a textual understanding of the Qur'an with the dynamic, flexible, and harmonious realities of life (contextual).

Fourth, as academics with a deeper understanding of religion from a scientific perspective, we should offer various solutions to address religious moderation, both among students and the public. Academics play a crucial role in building public awareness of middle-ground perspectives, attitudes, and behavior. Mutual respect and appreciation between lecturers and students should be continuously fostered. One person's perspective is inherently different from another's. In other words, understanding others' perspectives is part of religious moderation.

Five; Moderation, when combined with leadership, means a leader should be flexible and non-authoritarian. A leader is required to find the best solution to the various problems faced by all the elements under their leadership. A nurturing attitude, being a role model, and being able to bring change to society.

Six: quoting a saying "The trust is always in the middle" or in Arabic "Khairul umuur aswatuhaa" that a truth is always in the middle. Looking at the problem from two problematic sides, so that there is a meeting point of truth from both. The power of logic if not aligned with the middle path is as if it is simply a message justifying what is considered true. The power of logic in statistics is known as the interpolation technique. This technique is used to determine the value of the degrees of freedom that are not listed in the table (table t, f or r). The interpolation technique is a technique to reveal hidden values between two known values. Likewise, religious moderation is a moderate attitude when there are two choices between the extreme left and right.

Furthermore, based on observations researchers, There are two types of actualization of religious moderation in Islamic universities in Indonesia, first by including religious moderation content in the curriculum and implementing it in one course and establishing a religious moderation house. Second, through the hidden curriculum by including religious moderation content in all courses.

There are at least three factors for Islamic state university Jurai Siwo Lampung to include religious moderation in the curriculum. First, factual conditions in the field. Various cases of violence in the name of religion are of particular concern to the academic community. It is time to straighten out the wrong concept of jihad thinking (Oyosoro, 2023). The understanding of anti-Islamic groups that Islam is a rigid and violent religion and that Muslims are terrorists is not true (Naeem, 2022). Islamic universities are one of the stakeholders in strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia. Furthermore, universities should be at the forefront of implementing and strengthening religious moderation (Saifudin, 2019). Higher education is the right means to open the horizons of understanding that religion brings the message of loving each other not hating each other (Sutrisno, 2019).

Second, the rise of radicalism cases targeting students. Various cases of violence involving students indicate that students are the main target for the spread of radicalism (Jalwis, 2021; Lutfiyani & Ashoumi, 2022; Muqoyyidin, 2017). Various previous studies have found that radicalism has entered various well-known public universities in Indonesia and made students its main target (Asriani, 2019; Hamdi, 2021; Sufyan et al., 2022; Suharto, 2017; Susilo & Mustofa, 2024). Therefore, the preventive steps of higher education are immediately shown as a form of anticipation of the current phenomenon. Students play an important role in the effort to insert religious moderation values into society (Salamah et al., 2020). Third, although in plain sight there has never been a case of violence in the name of religion in Islamic universities in Indonesia, anticipation should be done early on.

So as one of the anticipations of the entry of radicalism in Islamic religious universities in Indonesia, a study centre for religious moderation was established. This study center was established to respond to the policy of the central government to establish a moderation house for Islamic religious universities. The task of the management of the study centre of religious moderation is to strengthen the thoughts and attitudes of religious moderation both in the academic community in Islamic religious universities and outside the campus. The realization of this task is manifested in the aspects of teaching and training, research and publication and community service.

The curriculum management with religious moderation content is realized with two types, namely establishing religious moderation as an institutional course. In this case, the steps taken to carry out this activity include; formulating the Learning Outcomes (CPL) of the Study Program (PS) in the aspect of attitude (S), and the aspect of knowledge (P) based on the values of religious moderation. Determining study materials based on religious moderation for the CPL of the PS in the aspect of attitude (S), aspects of Knowledge (P), aspects of general skills (KU), and aspects of special skills (KK) in the form of a concept map. Determine the name of religious moderation-based courses as institutional courses as well as the load of Semester Credit Units (SKS) and prepare Semester Learning Plans (RPS) for each religious moderation course.

The second type is the insertion of religious moderation content in related courses. For this pattern, the steps that can be taken include: Identifying the values of religious moderation in the CPL PS of the attitude aspect (S). Distribute CPL PS related to the attitude aspect (S) in related courses. Formulate Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK) based on religious moderation values. Formulate Sub-CPMK based on religious moderation values and develop RPS based on religious moderation.

A hidden curriculum is defined as a curriculum that has an impact on student behaviour, skills, knowledge and beliefs (Nurhayati & Hindun, 2024; Rahayu & Anwar, 2023; Yuliana et al., 2021). The findings are also in line with several studies that show that the experience as an elementary school teacher has successfully provided positive messages to students through the hidden curriculum (Ardilla et al., 2023; Aslan, 2019; Lestari, 2016; Maryani & Dewi, 2018; Mumu & Danial, 2021). In contrast to this research, other research shows that related to hidden curriculum, according to Apple, the hidden curriculum is related to certain ideologies that are carried out continuously (Suharto, 2012; Tilaar, 2003; Waseso & Sekarinasih, 2021). This means that the radical understanding that students have is not taken for granted. Rather, there is a radical ideology that is inserted into students so that on their shoulders it manages to become a collective memory so that it becomes a doctrine. This is where we know the importance of religious moderation content to be included in the hidden curriculum.

There are two reasons for INSURI Ponorogo to implement religious moderation content through a hidden curriculum, including the curriculum that has been implemented is the best alternative for now so there is no need for curriculum revision. The second is related to human resources (lecturers). Not all universities can control the ideology that is running at the institution (Hefni, 2020; Muasomah, 2013; Solichin, 2015). For public universities, the ideology of teaching lecturers can still be controlled by the government. But it is different with private universities whose founders come from various community groups. They have the freedom to implement regulations by the characteristics of each institution.

Implementation of religious moderation in the hidden curriculum can be done by inserting it in all courses, this insertion is done by presenting a balanced study of the Qur'an and Hadith combined with modern science. Qur'an and Hadith are used as a source of material and lecture silani. The lecture process is presented in two directions: discussion, dialogue and student field research guided by lecturers. Second, the content of religious moderation is substantively incorporated into the sub-subchapters in all course content both implied and explicit. Lecturers can transform the values of religious moderation during the learning process. This applies to all religious and general courses. Third; Organizing training, teaching and debriefing students during the stadium general with the theme of religious moderation. Fourth; In student training materials in the Student Activity Unit, religious moderation content is also inserted. And fifth; Students are expected to be wise in social media.

The Qur'an as a Muslim precedent commands Muslims to be moderate (Wahyudi, 2015). As the precedent of al-Sunnah shows the Prophet as a figure with a typical moderate when faced with two extreme choices, the prophet always chooses the middle ground (Fadl, 2006). Moderate Islam is the belief that Islam is appropriate for every time and age (li kulli zaman wa makan). Islam is not a fixed monument with rigid rules, this is due, in part, to the recent theology of Islamic militants (Oyosoro, 2023). However moderate Islam is a dynamic and active framework of faith. The achievements of fellow Muslims in the past are respected in such a way

that they are then actualized according to the present context (Fadl, 2006). Therefore, strengthening religious moderation is an important element to be developed continuously.

The four indicators of religious moderation are elements that reflect a moderate attitude for Muslims in Indonesia. National commitment is an element to see how the person's religious practice it has an impact on loyalty to the basic national consensus, especially in aspects related to Pancasila as the basis of the Indonesian state. So it will appear a person's attitude if the ideology he adheres to is contrary to Pancasila as the basis of the state (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

Furthermore, the attitude of tolerance. Tolerance can be understood as the attitude of someone who gives others the freedom to believe, implement their beliefs and express their opinions. Even though the opinion is different from our beliefs. Tolerance can also be understood as an attitude of spaciousness, accepting it gracefully, and voluntarily and open to facing differences. In line with the above understanding, religious tolerance also emphasizes three main things, namely respect, forgiveness and doing good. Respect means respecting other people's religions. Forgive and do good to adherents of other religions (Rahman & Shapie, 2023). The principle of tolerance in Islam is explained in the Qur'an letter al-An'am (6): 108 summarized into three principles; namely not blaspheming other religious worship. Recognizing the existence of other religions and preaching with gentleness (Anam et al., 2023). By choosing friends, it is the same as not being able to accept the differences that will occur during the friendship period. Whereas the most important thing in tolerance is how one can deal with differences.

Tolerance is closely related to the values of religious moderation, namely the value of tasamuh and musawah. Tasamuh means how a person is able and willing to respect a variety of diverse views and stances even though it does not agree with him. At the same time, musawah is equality and respect for fellow human beings as creatures of God. Humans have equal dignity without distinguishing ethnicity, race, gender or language as explained in the Qur'an letter al-Hujurat verse 13.

The last is accommodating local culture. An accommodative attitude towards local culture is defined as a person's attitude in accepting local cultural practices and traditions that apply to a community related to the practice of religious practice (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Moderate people tend to behave friendly towards local culture in their religious practices. This is done as long as the traditions prevailing in the community do not conflict with their religious aqidah. In a plural and multicultural society, moderation is understood as a shared commitment to maintaining balance. Every member of the community should learn to train each other to manage and overcome the differences between them (Suryadi, 2022). The attitude of accommodating local culture can be used as an educational value to shape individual character in accepting a variety of diverse practices that are accommodating and identical to local culture in Indonesia (Rizkiyah & Istiani, 2021).

The actualization of religious moderation at Islamic religious universities in Indonesia is different but still has the same goal of strengthening religious moderation. The morning of Islamic religious colleges that include religious moderation material as part of the independent curriculum of independent campus learning. The course description explains the purpose of the course to provide understanding and experience related to the teachings of Islam which are rahmatanlilalamin. Likewise related to the material in it, namely the study of thawasud (middle), tasamuh, (tolerant) tawazun (balanced), I'tidal (consistent, firm and fair), musawah, islah, awlawiyah, tathawur walibtiqar, tahadhdhur, khairiyah, ats-tsawabit wa muthaghayyirad, (egalitarian, reform, prioritizing, innovative, civilized, taking the best of two extremes, choosing relevant values and striving always to be more relevant).

Mastering religious moderation in students involves more than understanding; it requires developing moderate thinking and choosing the middle path (wasathiyah) in behavior. This includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Lecturers can implement the Visual Auditory Kinesthetic (VAK) learning model in practice (Hardiana & Suyata, 2018). The VAK learning model focuses on three primary learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Students who have a visual learning style tend to retain information more effectively when they

443

can see it directly. For example, lecturers can enhance learning by showing videos that discuss the rise of radicalism. On the other hand, the auditory learning style emphasizes listening as a key component of the learning process (Setiawan & Alimah, 2019). Discussion methods play a crucial role in the learning process, particularly for students with a kinesthetic learning style. These students thrive when learning materials are connected to their direct experiences, allowing them to engage more fully with the content. Kinesthetic learners are inherently more physically oriented, often thriving in environments that encourage movement and hands-on activities. By implementing the VAK learning model—encompassing Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic elements—effectively, educators can foster an atmosphere of active learning. This approach not only enables students to interact meaningfully with the material but also promotes collaboration and support among peers, enhancing the overall learning experience.

The goal of religious moderation learning is to cultivate a moderate attitude in students, irrespective of the stimulus and response. This aligns with Bruner's theory The central theme of the work is that the scientific study of human thinking must concentrate upon meaning and its achievement rather than upon the behaviorists' stimuli and responses and the presumed connections between them (Bruner et al., 2017). Consistent stimuli will lead to moderate behavior over time. Utilizing learning techniques that address students' auditory, visual, and kinesthetic styles will ultimately foster moderate behavioral responses. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the VAK learning model. For instance, Hardiana & Suyata (2018) research found that the VAK model significantly outperformed conventional methods in teaching summary writing, with a T-test showing a t value of 2.674 ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, Setiawan & Alimah (2019) study revealed that the VAK cooperative learning model is more effective than direct teaching in enhancing student activity.

While Islamic universities incorporate the principles of religious moderation throughout their hidden curriculum. This approach means that content related to religious moderation is integrated into all courses, rather than being limited to a specific course dedicated to the topic. As a result, lectures aim to cultivate a moderate Islamic character in students. During the learning process, instructors can employ a multisensory learning model that engages all the senses, including sight, hearing, touch, and, when appropriate, smell and taste (Yunus Abidin, 2014). The goal is to engage all the senses in order to facilitate meaningful learning. Schmidt said a skill performed in an environment that is predictable or stationary and that allows performers to plan their movements in advance (Richard A Schmidt & Timothy Donald Lee, 2005). Furthermore characteristic of individuals that are subject to change as a result of practice and that underlie the performance of various tasks. The theory outlined above suggests that individuals who experience stimulation more frequently are more likely to achieve success. Students who are consistently exposed to content on religious moderation in all their courses will develop moderate thinking skills more rapidly than those who receive such stimulation only occasionally.

Moreover, individual characteristics can evolve by emulating their role models. In this context, lecturers act as role models for students, as character development starts with the educators themselves (Anwar & Muhayati, 2021). Organizational behavior and career theorists have suggested that identification with role models is critical to individual growth and development. a person having good role model can be a success on his career and career failure by a lack of role models (Gibson, 2004). Individuals are urged to seek role models who can help them achieve their goals.

DISCUSSION

The research highlights three key points: first, academics can promote religious moderation in higher education institutions, and its implementation is up to each religious university in Indonesia. This aligns with the study by Najahan Musyafak et al. entitled " Dissimilarity implementasi konsep moderasi beragama di perguruan tinggi keagamaan Islam " (Musyafak et al., 2021). Rosyid (2022) research by titlle "Moderasi beragama di lingkungan perguruan tinggi keagamaan : Suatu Kajian atas alterasi kebijakan pendirian rumah moderasi beragama". The analysis of the two studies highlights the significance of promoting the values

of religious moderation in religious universities. It also discusses the different responses from Islamic religious universities in Indonesia regarding the policy to establish religious moderation houses.

The implementation of religious moderation in Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia is reflected in the curriculum, which includes dedicated courses on the topic. This approach aligns with the findings of research conducted by Maskuri et al., titled "Mengembangkan moderasi bergama mahasantri melalui ta'lim Ma'hadi di Pesantren mahasiswa" (Maskuri et al., 2020). Yuliani (2022) titled "Manajemen Kurikulum dalam bingkai moderasi beragama di era digital di Ma'had al-Jami'ah Ulil Absar IAIN Ponorogo". Salamah, Nugroho, & Nugroho (2020) "Upaya menyemai moderasi beragama mahasiswa IAIN Kudus melalui paradigma ilmu Islam Terapan". The research findings share a common theme with the three studies mentioned above, specifically regarding the implementation of religious moderation within the curriculum. However, there are notable differences. At UIN Jurai Siwo Metro, the content related to religious moderation is specifically taught in an institutional course titled "Islamic Studies and Religious Moderation," which carries a weight of 2 credits and is offered in the first semester. In contrast, the research by Maskuri presents different insights Through the applied curriculum, kyai and asatidz as qudwah hasanah internalize the values of justice, balance, harmony, moderation. Bustanul's research indicates that the religious moderation program at IAIN Ponorogo is conducted online every Saturday, led by instructors who hold religious moderation certifications. Similarly, Salamah, Nugroho, & Nugroho (2020) research findings reveal that IAIN Kudus has established applied Islamic studies as a distinctive course within the realm of religious moderation.

Three: actualizing religious moderation in Islamic higher education institutions through a hidden curriculum. The content related to moderation is substantially integrated into all courses. This approach aligns with Alsubaie (2015) research on "Hidden Curriculum as One of the Current Issues of Curriculum." Research findings indicate that the hidden curriculum plays a crucial role in schools due to its significant influence on students in various ways. Waseso & Sekarinasih (2021) research titled "Moderasi beragama sebagai Hidden Curriculum di perguruan tinggi". The study on operationalizing religious moderation, which emphasizes a tolerant and inclusive attitude, suggests that this hidden curriculum can be approached in three ways simultaneously. Firstly, the hidden curriculum acts as an instrument; secondly, religious moderation serves as a hidden value; and thirdly, the moderation of religion is intentionally integrated into the hidden curriculum. This integration is executed by reducing the intended learning outcomes (CPL) to more operational and measurable learning outcomes (CPMK). And Purwanto, Qowaid, Ma'rifataini, & Fauzi, (2019) with the title of the research "Internalisasi Nilai Modersi Beragama Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Perguruan Tinggi Umum". This study examines the internalization of moderating values through Islamic Religious Education courses at the Indonesian Education University in Bandung. The course material is tailored to student feedback, the expertise of the lecturers, and the resources available within the UPI campus environment. The curriculum is designed in accordance with the regulations set by the university. Internalization occurs through face-to-face interactions in lectures, tutorials, seminars, and similar activities. Evaluation is conducted by assessing Islamic insights through organized, written periodic reports submitted by lecturers and tutors.

Promoting the values of religious moderation among students is essential for fostering social harmony in a multicultural society and preventing the rise of radicalism among youth. This research can serve as a valuable reference for policymakers, educational institutions, and religious leaders as they develop learning plans, training programs, and curricula that are aligned with social realities. It is hoped that the younger generation will not only grasp the lecture material contextually but also apply it within a broader national and humanitarian framework.

This research was conducted over a period of one year, with effective data collection taking place over six months. Some weaknesses and limitations of the research include the difficulty of scheduling interviews with informants, particularly students, as it requires

445

adjustments to their class schedules and work hours for those with part-time jobs. Additionally, coding the interview results is time-consuming and poses challenges in compiling research reports according to the established timeline.

The concept of religious moderation is essential for the continued development of Indonesia, a multicultural nation. The academic community should promote moderate thinking among young intellectuals through a religious and multicultural approach. Education in religious moderation will create a generation that values tolerance, embraces diversity, and respects others. Additionally, integrating local wisdom into campus activities is crucial to counteract the erosion of local culture caused by modernity.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia. The first is by including religious moderation content in the curriculum implementing it in one course and establishing a religious moderation house. Second, through a hidden curriculum by including religious moderation content in all courses. This study recommends that building an attitude of religious moderation should be given to uphold the Muslim identity that Islam is rahmatan lil alamin.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

In writing this article, N.A. acts as the main author responsible for problem formulation, theoretical framework development, data collection, and writing the initial draft of the article. A.Y. contributed to the literature review, conceptual analysis, and preparation of the discussion section and the implications of the findings for Islamic education practices. N.S.W. was actively involved in the process of field data collection, interview transcription, and qualitative data analysis based on a phenomenological approach. Meanwhile, D.E.P. supported the final editing process, arranging references, and ensuring harmony and consistency between sections of the article before submission to the journal.

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446

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