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Religious Moderation as Pedagogical Communication in Islamic Higher Education: Curriculum Integration, Digital Literacy, and Academic Culture

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ABSTRACT

This study is grounded in the urgency of strengthening religious moderation in Islamic higher education as a response to increasing religious diversity, potential intolerance, and the need for a curriculum that develops students' religious knowledge, tolerance, inclusiveness, and national commitment. The study aims to analyze the implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah, examine lecturers' strategies in integrating these values into the learning process, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting their implementation. This research employed a qualitative field research design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and curriculum document analysis, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal that religious moderation values are implemented through four dimensions: structural, substantive, pedagogical, and cultural. Structurally, these values are integrated into the Outcome-Based Education curriculum through learning outcomes, semester learning plans, and assessment components. Substantively and pedagogically, values such as tolerance, justice, balance, anti-violence, appreciation of local culture, and national commitment are embedded through course materials, discussions, case studies, reflection, digital literacy, and lecturer role-modeling. Culturally, they are reinforced through academic culture, seminars, student organizations, and campus dialogue. This study contributes to Islamic education and communication studies by demonstrating that religious moderation should be understood as a lived curricular practice embedded in learning design, academic interaction, and institutional culture.

Keywords: Religious Moderation; Curriculum; Islamic Higher Education; Outcome-Based Education; Da'wah Communication



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is widely recognized as a country with complex religious, cultural, ethnic, and social diversity. This plurality represents a valuable national asset, but at the same time it also creates challenges in maintaining social harmony, interreligious tolerance, and national cohesion. As a country with a large Muslim population, Indonesia faces the responsibility of ensuring that religious life develops in a peaceful, inclusive, and balanced manner. In this context, religious moderation has become an important discourse because it emphasizes tolerance, mutual respect, openness toward

differences, and the rejection of extremism and intolerance (Nurdiyana, 2020; Prakosa, 2022).

The concept of moderation is closely related to the Arabic term *wasathiyah*, which refers to a middle, balanced, and non-extreme position in understanding and practicing religion. In the Indonesian linguistic context, moderation is derived from the word “moderate,” which means taking a middle position or avoiding excessive attitudes (Salim & Salim, 1991). Religious moderation is therefore understood as a religious attitude that seeks harmony, balance, and social peace in individual, family, community, and national life (Aqib, 2010). This concept becomes increasingly relevant in multicultural societies because religious and cultural differences may become sources of social tension when they are not managed through tolerance and mutual understanding (Akhmadi, 2019).

Religious moderation in Indonesia is also framed through several key indicators. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia identifies four indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, anti-radicalism or anti-violence, and accommodation of local traditions (N. Hidayati et al., 2021). These indicators show that religious moderation does not weaken religious belief. Rather, it strengthens the ability of religious communities to practice their faith while respecting other groups, maintaining national unity, rejecting violence, and appreciating local wisdom. In Islamic education, these values are essential because educational institutions are expected to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable in religion but also tolerant, inclusive, and able to live peacefully within a plural society.

Normatively, religious moderation is rooted in Islamic teachings. The Qur’an emphasizes freedom of religion and the absence of coercion in faith, as stated in QS. Al-Baqarah/2:256. This verse affirms that religious belief cannot be imposed and that the path of truth must be accepted through awareness, not compulsion (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019). The Qur’an also highlights the importance of recognizing diversity through QS. Al-Hujurat/49:13, which explains that human beings are created into nations and tribes so that they may know one another. These verses provide a theological foundation for respecting differences and building social relations based on mutual recognition. In addition, the prophetic mission to perfect noble character shows that tolerance, respect, and ethical conduct are central to Islamic teachings (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, n.d.).

In the Indonesian legal and policy context, religious moderation is also supported by constitutional and regulatory foundations. The 1945 Constitution guarantees the freedom of every citizen to embrace and practice religion. Law No. 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights further affirms the freedom of religious belief and worship (Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, 1999). In addition, Presidential Regulation No. 83 of 2015 gives the Ministry of Religious Affairs the authority to administer government affairs in the field of religion (Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2015). More recently, Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023 concerning the Strengthening of Religious Moderation and Ministerial Regulation of Religious Affairs No. 3 of 2024 concerning coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting procedures for strengthening religious moderation provide stronger policy support for the implementation of religious moderation in various sectors, including education (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2024; Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2023).

Islamic higher education institutions have a strategic position in implementing religious moderation because they function not only as centers of religious knowledge but also as spaces for shaping students’ character, worldview, and social responsibility. In this regard, curriculum becomes an important instrument for internalizing moderation values. A curriculum that integrates religious moderation should not merely transmit religious knowledge, but should also cultivate tolerance, respect for diversity, openness, national commitment, and the ability to respond wisely to religious and cultural differences. (Muchith, 2023) emphasizes that Islamic education curriculum based on

religious moderation is important for strengthening students' inclusive character and preventing narrow religious understanding.

IAIN Parepare, as an Islamic higher education institution, has a responsibility to prepare students who possess religious knowledge, moral integrity, and moderate attitudes in responding to social and religious diversity. This responsibility is particularly significant for the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah because its academic fields are closely related to Islamic thought, culture, da'wah, communication, history, and social life. These fields provide a strategic space for examining how religious moderation values are translated into curriculum, learning processes, academic interaction, and campus culture.

Previous studies have discussed religious moderation in relation to Islamic education, tolerance, and curriculum development. (Mukmin & Nopriansyah, 2017), for example, emphasized religious tolerance through Alwi Shihab's inclusive Islamic perspective, showing that Islam can become a foundation for dialogue and peaceful coexistence. (Asiyah et al., 2021) discussed the internalization of religious moderation in the development of Islamic education curriculum based on the Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka framework, indicating that curriculum reform provides opportunities for strengthening moderation values in higher education. (Azimi, 2009) also emphasized the importance of comprehensive Islamic studies as an effort to understand Islam in its various dimensions, which is relevant to the development of moderate religious understanding.

Although these studies have contributed to the discussion of religious moderation, several gaps remain. First, previous studies generally discuss religious moderation at the conceptual, normative, or policy level, while empirical studies on how moderation values are implemented in a specific faculty curriculum remain limited. Second, existing discussions often focus on the importance of moderation in education, but do not sufficiently explain how these values are integrated into curriculum structure, learning outcomes, course materials, lecturer strategies, and campus culture. Third, the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic higher education needs to be examined not only through formal curriculum documents, but also through classroom practices, lecturer-student interaction, academic activities, and hidden curriculum. Fourth, there is still a need to identify supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the effectiveness of religious moderation implementation in the curriculum.

Based on these gaps, this study focuses on the implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah. This study argues that religious moderation cannot be understood merely as an additional topic in Islamic higher education. Rather, it should be seen as a curricular value that must be integrated structurally, substantively, pedagogically, and culturally. Structurally, religious moderation needs to be embedded in curriculum design, learning outcomes, semester learning plans, and assessment. Substantively, it must appear in course content related to tolerance, justice, balance, anti-violence, national commitment, and appreciation of local culture. Pedagogically, it should be implemented through lecturer strategies such as discussion, case study, reflection, contextual learning, and persuasive approaches. Culturally, it should be strengthened through academic culture, student activities, seminars, and spaces for dialogue.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze three main issues. First, it examines the forms of implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah. Second, it investigates the strategies used by lecturers in implementing religious moderation values in the learning process. Third, it identifies the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum. Through these objectives, this study is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic higher education curriculum, particularly in strengthening religious moderation as an academic, pedagogical, and cultural practice.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative field research design with a descriptive-interpretive approach. The qualitative design was selected because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of how religious moderation values are implemented in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah. Rather than measuring variables statistically, this study explored meanings, experiences, strategies, and institutional practices related to the implementation of religious moderation values in curriculum documents, learning processes, and academic culture.

The study was grounded in an interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm assumes that social reality is constructed through the meanings, experiences, and interactions of individuals within a particular institutional and cultural context (Creswell, 2013). In this study, religious moderation was not examined merely as a formal policy or curriculum concept, but as a lived academic practice experienced by curriculum managers, lecturers, and students. Therefore, the qualitative approach was considered appropriate for understanding how religious moderation values are interpreted, integrated, taught, and experienced in the context of Islamic higher education.

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah, IAIN Parepare, Indonesia. This site was selected because the faculty has academic disciplines that are directly related to Islamic thought, da'wah, culture, communication, history, and social life. These academic fields provide a relevant context for examining the implementation of religious moderation values in curriculum structure, course content, lecturer pedagogy, and campus academic culture.

Informants

The informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling. This technique was used because the study required participants who had direct knowledge, experience, and involvement in the implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum and learning process. The informants consisted of three main groups: institutional curriculum leaders, lecturers, and students.

The first group consisted of institutional actors involved in curriculum development and academic quality improvement, particularly those responsible for curriculum planning and the integration of religious moderation values into learning outcomes, semester learning plans, and academic policies. The second group consisted of lecturers who taught courses relevant to Islamic studies, da'wah, culture, communication, history, social studies, and institutional courses. These lecturers were selected because they were directly involved in translating curriculum documents into classroom practices. The third group consisted of students from the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah who had participated in courses and academic activities in which religious moderation values were either explicitly or implicitly integrated.

The selection of informants was based on relevance to the research objectives. Informants were chosen because they were able to provide information about curriculum design, course implementation, lecturer strategies, student experiences, and supporting or inhibiting factors in the implementation of religious moderation values. The adequacy of informants was determined by the richness, relevance, and saturation of the data obtained during the research process.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. These techniques were used to obtain comprehensive data from different sources and to allow triangulation between institutional perspectives, lecturer practices, student experiences, and curriculum documents.

First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with curriculum leaders, lecturers, and students. Interviews with curriculum leaders focused on policy direction, curriculum development, the integration of religious moderation values into the Outcome-Based Education framework, learning outcomes, semester learning plans, and assessment mechanisms. Interviews with lecturers explored their understanding of religious moderation, the values they integrated into their courses, the teaching strategies they used, and the challenges they encountered in implementing moderation values in the classroom. Interviews with students explored their learning experiences, perceptions of religious moderation, classroom interaction, academic culture, and the extent to which moderation values influenced their attitudes toward diversity.

Second, non-participant observation was used to observe academic and learning practices related to religious moderation. The researcher observed classroom interaction, lecturer-student communication, discussion patterns, and the ways in which tolerance, openness, respect for difference, and dialogical learning were practiced. The observation was conducted without direct involvement in classroom activities in order to maintain the naturalness of the learning process.

Third, document analysis was conducted by examining curriculum documents and learning instruments relevant to the implementation of religious moderation values. The documents included curriculum structure, graduate learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, semester learning plans, course descriptions, institutional academic policies, and other documents related to religious moderation and curriculum development. Document analysis was important to identify whether religious moderation values were integrated formally in curriculum planning and how these values were translated into course materials, learning methods, and assessment components.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles et al., 2014). This model was used because qualitative data in this study were obtained from multiple sources and required a systematic process of organizing, interpreting, and verifying meaning.

The first stage was data condensation. At this stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and curriculum documents were read repeatedly to identify relevant information related to the research focus. Data were selected, simplified, categorized, and coded based on the main research questions. The coding process focused on several themes, including the forms of religious moderation implementation, lecturer strategies, curriculum integration, student experiences, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors.

The second stage was data display. The condensed data were organized into thematic matrices and narrative descriptions. Data from curriculum leaders, lecturers, students, observations, and documents were compared to identify patterns, similarities, differences, and relationships among findings. The data display helped the researcher understand how religious moderation values were implemented structurally, substantively, pedagogically, and culturally.

The third stage was conclusion drawing and verification. Conclusions were developed gradually by interpreting patterns that emerged from the data. These conclusions were continuously verified by comparing interview data with observation results and document analysis. This process ensured that the findings were not based on a single source, but were supported by multiple forms of evidence.

In addition to the interactive analysis model, thematic analysis was used to strengthen the interpretation of qualitative data. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns of meaning related to religious moderation values, curriculum implementation, lecturer pedagogy, student attitudes, and institutional support (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this process, the study produced several major

themes, including structural integration, substantive integration, pedagogical implementation, cultural reinforcement, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors.

Trustworthiness of the Data

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied triangulation, member checking, audit trail, and peer review. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from interviews, observation, and document analysis. Source triangulation was also applied by comparing information from curriculum leaders, lecturers, and students. This process helped ensure that the findings reflected a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the implementation of religious moderation values.

Member checking was conducted by confirming relevant interpretations with selected participants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation was consistent with the participants' intended meanings. An audit trail was maintained by documenting the research process, including data collection procedures, coding notes, analytical decisions, and thematic development. Peer review was also used by involving academic colleagues to review the research process, emerging findings, and interpretation of data. These procedures were used to strengthen the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the study.

Through this methodological design, the study was able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah. The combination of interviews, observation, document analysis, interactive data analysis, and trustworthiness procedures enabled the study to explain not only how religious moderation values were formally integrated into the curriculum, but also how they were practiced in learning processes and academic culture.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The findings reveal that the implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah was carried out through three main dimensions: curriculum integration, lecturer pedagogical strategies, and institutional supporting and inhibiting factors.

Curriculum Integration of Religious Moderation Values

Religious moderation values were integrated into the curriculum both explicitly and implicitly. Structurally, these values appeared in the Outcome-Based Education framework through graduate learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, semester learning plans, and assessment components. The curriculum leader stated that religious moderation had been incorporated into the curriculum through learning outcomes and course design:

"The curriculum of FUAD IAIN Parepare has contained religious moderation values explicitly and implicitly within the OBE framework. This can be seen from the learning outcomes, where there are specific graduate learning outcomes related to moderation, and these are elaborated into course learning outcomes."

(Fajriyani, interview, April 17, 2026)

Substantively, religious moderation values were found in several courses, including Da'wah Studies, Islamic Ethics, Sociology of Religion, Islamic Civilization History, Pancasila Education, Citizenship Education, Local Culture Studies, and Digital Da'wah Media. The values most frequently identified were tolerance, justice, balance, anti-violence, national commitment, respect for local culture, and appreciation of differences. A student explained:

"The courses that most strongly instill religious moderation in FUAD are Islamic Ethics and da'wah courses because they are directly related to tolerance, social life, and a way of being religious that is not extreme."

(Nabila Putri Salsabila R., interview, April 17, 2026)

The findings also show that religious moderation was not limited to formal curriculum documents. It was also strengthened through academic culture, seminars, student organizations, new student orientation, and classroom interaction. Thus, religious moderation was implemented through both formal curriculum and hidden curriculum.

Table 1. Forms of Religious Moderation Implementation

Form of Implementation	Description	Examples Found in the Study
Structural Integration	Religious moderation values were integrated into the formal curriculum structure.	Graduate learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, semester learning plans, and assessment components.
Substantive Integration	Religious moderation values were inserted into course materials.	Tolerance, justice, balance, anti-violence, national commitment, respect for local culture, and appreciation of religious diversity.
Pedagogical Integration	Religious moderation values were implemented through teaching and learning strategies.	Classroom discussion, case studies, historical analysis, textual analysis, reflection, contextual learning, and digital literacy.
Cultural Integration	Religious moderation values were strengthened through academic and campus culture.	Academic discussions, seminars, student organizations, new student orientation, lecturer role-modeling, and dialogical interaction.

Lecturers' Strategies in Implementing Religious Moderation Values

The second finding concerns lecturers' strategies in implementing religious moderation values in the learning process. The study found that lecturers used several strategies: dialogical discussion, case studies, contextual learning, historical analysis, textual analysis, reflective learning, digital literacy, lecturer role-modeling, and persuasive educational approaches.

Table 2. Lecturers' Strategies in Implementing Religious Moderation Values

Strategy	Description	Learning Practices
Dialogical Discussion	Lecturers created open forums for exchanging ideas.	Group discussion, class debate, opinion sharing, and dialogue on religious differences.
Case Study	Students analyzed social and religious issues.	Cases of intolerance, radicalism, cultural conflict, and religious diversity.
Contextual Learning	Lecturers connected moderation values with real-life situations.	Examples from campus life, society, media, and local culture.
Historical and Textual Analysis	Students examined religious texts and historical experiences.	Analysis of Islamic civilization, schools of thought, traditions, and interpretations.

Reflective Learning	Students reflected on values and attitudes.	Reflective assignments, ethical decision-making, and self-evaluation.
Digital Literacy	Moderation values were connected with digital communication.	Media da'wah, disinformation, tolerance in social media, and online ethics.
Lecturer Role-Modeling	Lecturers demonstrated moderate attitudes.	Respectful communication, openness, non-discriminatory treatment, and appreciation of differences.
Persuasive Educational Approach	Lecturers responded to intolerant tendencies through dialogue.	Clarification, mentoring, guidance, and non-confrontational correction.

Lecturers implemented religious moderation values through dialogical, contextual, reflective, and persuasive strategies. Classroom discussion was the most frequently used strategy. Lecturers created open spaces for students to express opinions, listen to different perspectives, and practice respectful communication. One lecturer emphasized:

"I create discussion forums where students take turns becoming presenters and give them an understanding that the discussion forum is not an arena for finding who is right or wrong."
(Abd. Rasyid, interview, April 17, 2026)

In addition to discussion, lecturers used case studies, textual analysis, historical analysis, contextual learning, and reflective assignments. These strategies helped students understand religious moderation not only as a concept, but also as an attitude practiced in academic and social life. A lecturer explained:

"I use discussion, case studies, textual analysis, contextual learning, and real examples so that these values are not only understood theoretically but also internalized."
(Aksa Muhammad Nawawi, interview, April 17, 2026)

Religious moderation was also connected to digital literacy, especially in courses related to media and da'wah. Students were encouraged to avoid discriminatory attitudes, misinformation, and intolerant debates in digital spaces. In this context, moderation was understood as the ability to communicate religious messages wisely, fairly, and responsibly.

Lecturer role-modeling also became an important strategy. Students perceived that lecturers taught moderation not only through course materials, but also through respectful attitudes, openness, and non-discriminatory classroom interaction.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The third finding shows that the implementation of religious moderation values was influenced by both supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors included institutional policy, Outcome-Based Education curriculum, lecturer training, academic activities, lecturer collaboration, student acceptance of diversity, and campus culture. Inhibiting factors included inconsistent evaluation indicators, uneven implementation across courses, limited contextual teaching materials, diverse student backgrounds, and the dependence of implementation on individual lecturers.

Table 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
Institutional policy supporting religious moderation	Lack of uniform indicators for evaluating religious moderation implementation
Outcome-Based Education curriculum framework	Uneven consistency of implementation across courses

Integration of moderation values into learning outcomes and semester learning plans	Limited contextual and operational teaching materials
Lecturer training, seminars, and workshops	Diverse student backgrounds and different levels of religious understanding
Academic and student activities supporting tolerance	Some students still have rigid or narrow religious perspectives
Lecturer collaboration in strengthening moderation	Implementation depends heavily on the creativity and commitment of individual lecturers
Student openness toward diversity	Not all students perceive religious moderation as an explicit part of their courses
Campus culture that supports dialogue and mutual respect	Open discussion spaces are not experienced equally by all students

The implementation of religious moderation values was supported by institutional policy, the Outcome-Based Education curriculum framework, lecturer training, academic seminars, lecturer collaboration, student openness, and campus culture that encouraged dialogue and tolerance. Institutional policy played an important role because it directed study programs to include religious moderation in learning outcomes, course planning, and assessment.

However, several inhibiting factors were also found. The first challenge was the absence of uniform indicators for evaluating the success of religious moderation implementation. The curriculum leader explained that assessment still depended on individual lecturers and their instruments:

"In implementation, we do not specifically measure the success of religious moderation implementation. This depends on the course lecturers and the instruments they use to measure the integration of religious moderation values."

(Fajriyani, interview, April 17, 2026)

The second challenge was the uneven consistency of implementation across courses. Some lecturers explicitly integrated moderation values into learning, while others inserted them implicitly through examples and classroom interaction. Another challenge was the diversity of students' religious understanding. Some students still had rigid perspectives toward differences, which required lecturers to use persuasive and educational approaches.

Limited contextual teaching materials also became an obstacle. Lecturers needed more practical and contextual materials to translate religious moderation values into learning activities, case studies, assignments, and assessment tools. In addition, not all students perceived religious moderation as an explicit part of their courses. One student stated:

"The courses I took did not specifically discuss religious moderation, but each course provided small examples, except Local Culture Studies."

(Nurul Febriana, interview, April 17, 2026)

Overall, the findings show that religious moderation values were implemented through a multi-layered process involving curriculum structure, course content, lecturer strategies, and academic culture. However, the implementation still requires stronger evaluation indicators, more contextual teaching materials, and more consistent integration across courses.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah is not limited to

the insertion of moderation-related topics into several courses. Rather, it appears as a multi-layered process involving curriculum structure, course content, lecturer pedagogy, and academic culture. This finding confirms that religious moderation in Islamic higher education should be understood as an integrated curricular practice. It is not merely a normative discourse, but a set of values that must be translated into learning outcomes, semester learning plans, teaching strategies, assessment, and campus interaction.

The first important finding concerns the structural integration of religious moderation values into the Outcome-Based Education curriculum. Religious moderation was integrated into graduate learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, semester learning plans, and assessment components. This finding indicates that religious moderation has moved from an abstract institutional ideal into a formal curriculum structure. In curriculum theory, such integration is important because curriculum functions not only as a list of courses but also as a planned educational experience that shapes knowledge, attitudes, and competencies (Siregar & Siregar, 2020). In this context, religious moderation becomes part of the expected graduate profile, especially in producing students who are religiously knowledgeable, tolerant, inclusive, and socially responsible.

This finding is relevant to the concept of religious moderation promoted by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, which emphasizes national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture (N. A. Hidayati, 2020). The curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah reflects these indicators through course content related to tolerance, justice, balance, anti-violence, respect for local traditions, and appreciation of diversity. Thus, the implementation of religious moderation in this study supports (Muchith, 2023) argument that Islamic education curriculum should be developed as a medium for strengthening moderate religious understanding and preventing narrow or exclusive religious attitudes.

The substantive integration of religious moderation values across courses also demonstrates that moderation is not confined to one specific subject. Students encountered moderation values in Islamic Ethics, Da'wah Studies, Sociology of Religion, Islamic Civilization History, Pancasila Education, Citizenship Education, Local Culture Studies, and Digital Da'wah Media. This finding differs from approaches that place religious moderation only in a single course or specific program. Instead, the curriculum in this study shows a cross-disciplinary pattern. This is important because the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah deals with religious thought, communication, culture, history, da'wah, and social life. Therefore, religious moderation becomes more meaningful when it is connected to various academic fields and real social contexts.

This finding is consistent with (Rido, 2024) study, which found that religious moderation values in Islamic higher education can be implemented through curriculum content, lecturer-student communication, and integration between classroom learning and activities outside the classroom. However, the present study extends Rido's findings by showing that religious moderation can be implemented through four interconnected dimensions: structural, substantive, pedagogical, and cultural. This study also complements the work of (Adha et al., 2023), who emphasized the internalization of religious moderation values through lecture materials, campus support, lecturers' roles, seminars, and moderation houses. The present study confirms that lecturer roles and campus programs are important, but it further highlights the need to connect these elements with formal curriculum design and learning outcomes.

The pedagogical dimension is another significant finding. Lecturers implemented religious moderation values through discussion, case studies, contextual learning, historical analysis, textual analysis, reflective assignments, digital literacy, role-modeling, and persuasive approaches. These strategies show that religious moderation was not taught only as a theoretical concept but also as a lived practice in classroom interaction. This is closely related to value education theory, which explains that values are

internalized not only through instruction but also through reflection, modeling, social experience, and habituation (Berkowitz, 2011; Rokeach, 1973). In this study, students learned tolerance not merely by hearing definitions of tolerance, but by practicing respectful discussion, listening to different opinions, and observing lecturers' moderate attitudes.

The use of dialogical discussion and case studies is particularly important. Classroom discussion trained students to express arguments without imposing their views on others. Case studies helped students connect religious moderation with real issues such as intolerance, radicalism, cultural differences, and digital communication. This finding supports (Suja'i & others, 2024), who argue that discussion and case-based learning are effective strategies for fostering religious moderation in Islamic education. It also strengthens the relevance of transformative learning theory, where students' perspectives can change through critical reflection, dialogue, and engagement with social problems (Mezirow, 1991). In the context of this study, moderation values were internalized when students were encouraged to examine differences critically and reflectively.

The integration of religious moderation into digital literacy is another important contribution of this study. In courses related to contemporary da'wah and digital media, students were encouraged to understand tolerance, justice, and non-discrimination in online spaces. This finding broadens the scope of religious moderation from face-to-face interaction to digital religious communication. In the current era, intolerance and radical narratives can spread through digital platforms. Therefore, integrating moderation values into digital da'wah and media literacy is a relevant pedagogical strategy. This shows that religious moderation curriculum in Islamic higher education should respond not only to classical issues of religious diversity but also to contemporary challenges in digital society.

The cultural dimension of implementation shows that religious moderation was also strengthened through hidden curriculum. Students experienced moderation through seminars, new student orientation, student organizations, academic discussions, lecturer attitudes, and campus interaction. This finding is in line with hidden curriculum theory, which explains that students learn values not only from formal curriculum but also from institutional culture, social relations, and everyday academic practices (Giroux & Penna, 1979; Margolis, 2001). In this study, the hidden curriculum became an important space for strengthening moderation because students learned respect, tolerance, and openness through repeated academic and social experiences.

Compared with the study by (Salamah et al., 2020), which emphasized the role of applied Islamic science, moderation houses, and institutional programs in strengthening religious moderation at IAIN Kudus, this study shows a different but complementary pattern. The implementation of religious moderation in the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah is not centered on one institutional program only, but distributed across curriculum documents, courses, lecturer strategies, and academic culture. This distributed model offers a contribution to the literature by showing that religious moderation can be strengthened through an integrated faculty-level curriculum ecosystem.

However, the findings also reveal several challenges. The most important challenge is the absence of uniform indicators for evaluating the success of religious moderation implementation. Although moderation values have been integrated into curriculum documents and learning processes, their assessment still depends largely on individual lecturers. This creates uneven implementation across courses. Another challenge is the limited availability of contextual teaching materials. Lecturers need practical materials, case studies, assessment rubrics, and learning modules that can help translate moderation values into concrete classroom activities. These challenges support (Chadidjah et al., 2021), who found that the implementation of religious

moderation in education often remains implicit and is not always supported by clear instruments or systematic evaluation.

The diversity of students' religious understanding also becomes an important factor. Students come from different social, educational, and religious backgrounds. Some students may already have open and tolerant attitudes, while others may still hold rigid views toward differences. This situation requires lecturers to use persuasive, educational, and non-confrontational strategies. The finding shows that lecturers tend to respond to intolerant tendencies through dialogue, clarification, mentoring, and scientific argumentation. This approach is important because the goal of religious moderation is not to silence difference, but to guide students toward more balanced, ethical, and inclusive ways of understanding religion.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of religious moderation studies by proposing that implementation should be understood through four dimensions: structural, substantive, pedagogical, and cultural. Structurally, moderation must be written into curriculum systems. Substantively, it must appear in course content. Pedagogically, it must be practiced through learning strategies. Culturally, it must be strengthened through academic habits and campus interaction. This four-dimensional model can be used as an analytical framework for studying religious moderation implementation in other Islamic higher education institutions.

Practically, the findings suggest that Islamic higher education institutions need to strengthen religious moderation implementation through more systematic curriculum mapping, clearer assessment indicators, contextual teaching materials, lecturer training, and stronger coordination between curriculum units and moderation centers. Religious moderation should not depend solely on the personal creativity of lecturers. It needs institutional support, measurable indicators, and sustainable academic programs. Faculties whose disciplines are closely related to religion, culture, communication, and social life should become strategic spaces for developing moderation-based curriculum models.

Future research may extend this study in several ways. First, comparative studies can be conducted across different faculties or Islamic higher education institutions to examine whether the four-dimensional model of implementation appears in other contexts. Second, future studies can develop and test instruments for measuring the effectiveness of religious moderation integration in curriculum and learning outcomes. Third, further research can explore students' long-term internalization of religious moderation values after participating in moderation-based learning. Fourth, studies on religious moderation in digital da'wah and online religious communication are also needed, considering the increasing role of digital media in shaping students' religious understanding.

Overall, this study shows that the implementation of religious moderation values in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah is a dynamic and multi-layered process. It involves formal curriculum design, course content, lecturer pedagogy, and academic culture. While the implementation has been supported by institutional policy, lecturer commitment, and student openness, it still requires stronger evaluation mechanisms, contextual teaching materials, and consistent integration across courses. These findings affirm that religious moderation in Islamic higher education should be developed not only as a policy agenda but as a lived academic practice.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that religious moderation values have been implemented in the curriculum of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah through structural, substantive, pedagogical, and cultural dimensions. Structurally, these values are integrated into the Outcome-Based Education curriculum through graduate learning

outcomes, course learning outcomes, semester learning plans, and assessment components. Substantively, religious moderation appears in course materials related to tolerance, justice, balance, anti-violence, national commitment, appreciation of local culture, and respect for differences. Pedagogically, lecturers implement these values through classroom discussion, case studies, contextual learning, historical and textual analysis, reflection, digital literacy, and persuasive approaches. Culturally, religious moderation is strengthened through academic culture, seminars, student organizations, lecturer role-modeling, and campus interaction.

The findings contribute to the literature on Islamic higher education by showing that religious moderation should not be understood merely as a policy discourse or additional course content, but as a lived academic practice embedded in curriculum design, learning processes, and institutional culture. Practically, this study suggests the need for clearer assessment indicators, more contextual teaching materials, stronger lecturer training, and more consistent integration of moderation values across courses. Future research may compare similar practices across different faculties or Islamic higher education institutions, develop instruments for measuring the effectiveness of religious moderation integration, and examine students' long-term internalization of moderation values in academic, social, and digital contexts.

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