



## Strategies for Integrating Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Higher Education

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### Abstract

*This study examines strategies for instilling religious moderation values in enhancing Islamic Religious Education within the Department of Islamic Education at UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research investigates how religious moderation is integrated into the curriculum, pedagogical practices, and academic culture of an Islamic higher education institution operating in a digital learning environment. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with lecturers, students, and academic administrators, classroom observations, and analysis of curriculum documents and institutional policies. The findings reveal that religious moderation is systematically embedded across core courses through dialogical teaching, experiential learning, interfaith dialogue, and community engagement. These strategies contribute to the development of students' moderate religious attitudes, critical thinking skills, and social inclusivity. However, the study also identifies challenges related to student resistance, uneven faculty preparedness, and the influence of digital media in shaping religious perspectives. The study concludes that sustained institutional commitment, faculty development, and adaptive curriculum design are essential for strengthening religious moderation education in Islamic higher education. This research contributes to the discourse on Islamic education by offering an integrative model for promoting religious moderation in pluralistic and digital contexts.*

## Introduction

Religious moderation constitutes a fundamental principle in Islamic teachings, emphasizing balance (tawazun), tolerance (tasamuh), and inclusivity within religious life. Rooted in the concept of wasatiyyah, moderation advocates a middle path that avoids both extremism and excessive liberalism, as clearly articulated in Islamic scripture and prophetic traditions (Al-Faruqi, 2013; Hutagalung, 2023). In contemporary contexts, religious moderation has emerged as a critical discourse for addressing ideological rigidity and religious polarization that threaten social harmony, particularly in plural societies such as Indonesia (Azra, 2020; Hutabarat, 2023; Idi & Priansyah, 2023; Ikhwan et al., 2023).

Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, faces increasing challenges related to religious intolerance, radicalization, and sectarian tensions, especially among younger generations (Sebastian & Arifianto, 2020; Zuhdi, 2018). These dynamics are exacerbated by rapid socio-political change and the expansive reach of digital media. In response, the Indonesian government, particularly through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has promoted religious moderation as a national agenda embedded within educational policies and institutional programs (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Sudrajat et al., 2021). Education is therefore positioned as a strategic arena for cultivating moderate religious understanding and preventing the spread of extremist ideologies (Anzaikhan et al., 2023; Qadri et al., 2024; Chanifah, 2026).

Within this framework, Islamic Education (PAI) plays a pivotal role in shaping students' religious perspectives, ethical orientations, and civic responsibility (Husaeni, 2023; Mansir & Karim, 2020). As a discipline, PAI is not limited to doctrinal transmission but also functions as a means of character formation grounded in Islamic values. Previous studies emphasize that PAI contributes significantly to developing spiritual resilience, moral integrity, and national cohesion amid globalization and ideological contestation (Hidayat & Abidin, 2022; Lubis, 2025). Consequently, strengthening religious moderation through PAI is both an educational and socio-cultural imperative.

The urgency of embedding religious moderation within Islamic education has become more pronounced in the era of digitalization and pluralism (Husain, 2025; Syahrin & Widodo, 2025; Rasyidin & Fahrudin, 2024). Digital transformation has reshaped learning environments, teaching methods, and patterns of religious knowledge dissemination. While technological advancement offers opportunities for innovation, it also introduces challenges such as cyber radicalization, misinformation, and ethical degradation among students (Hasanah & Sukri, 2023; Sugiyono & Khojir, 2021). Therefore, Islamic education institutions are required to integrate digital literacy with religious values to ensure that students engage with technology in a critical, ethical, and responsible manner.

Pluralism further intensifies the need for religious moderation in Islamic education. Indonesia's multicultural and multireligious context demands educational approaches that promote mutual respect, interreligious dialogue, and social cohesion (Haq et al., 2023; Kusuma & Susilo, 2020; D. Safitri et al., 2022). Studies indicate that inclusive curricula and religious literacy can enhance students' understanding of diversity while reinforcing moderate Islamic values (Ilyas & Maknun, 2023; L. N. Safitri et al., 2023). Accordingly, Islamic education must transcend dogmatic instruction and cultivate an open, dialogical, and humanistic learning environment that aligns faith with social reality (Fatimah et al., 2021).

Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIN) hold a strategic position in institutionalizing religious moderation through curriculum design, pedagogical practices, and academic culture. Faculty members play a central role as agents of moderation by modeling tolerant behavior and employing dialogical, critical, and anthropological teaching approaches (Sofyan et al., 2022; Sugiarti & Roqib, 2021). However, challenges persist, including disparities in faculty commitment, limited institutional resources, and the persistence of rigid religious interpretations, which necessitate systematic strategies and strong institutional support (Kurniawan, 2025; Rohman & Juniawati, 2023).

Against this backdrop, this study focuses on the Department of Islamic Education (PAI) at UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, which operates within a digital-based university system and serves as a unique case of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. The institution faces the dual challenge of digital transformation and the cultivation of moderate religious values. This research aims to analyze how religious moderation values are integrated into the PAI curriculum, identify effective pedagogical strategies employed by lecturers, and explore the challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing religious moderation education. Through this investigation, the study seeks to contribute to the development of Islamic education that is inclusive, adaptive, and responsive to contemporary societal demands.

## Methods

This research was a case study of a qualitative type that was used to analyze the strategies of inculcating religious moderation values in the Department of Islamic Religious Education at the UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. The research was centered on the interpretation of

religious moderation, its translation into the educational practice, and its upholding by the curriculum design, classroom instruction, and academic culture in an Islamic institution of higher learning. The qualitative case study was deemed the best method due to the fact that the problem in question is highly connected to the context of institutions, human relations, and experience in education. This design allowed to investigate not only what strategies were applied but how and why those strategies were applied in this or that pedagogical and organizational context.

The case was limited to the Islamic Religious Education at UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon as a specific institutional location functioning within a digital learning context and at the same time possesses a huge mandate to instill moderate religious values. This interest on this program was not just administrative but analytical since the program is the hub where religious moderation is communicated in terms of course content, practices of lecturers, and student formation. This narrowing to this unit of the institution enabled the research to produce a more profound and logical insight into the correlation between the intentions of formal curriculum and its implementation in the daily teaching and learning practices. This narrow scope also enhances the internal consistency of the study since it is correlated with the research objectives that highlight the importance of curriculum integration, pedagogical and implementation issues.

Participants were chosen purposely to make the data capture the views of the participants who were directly involved in designing and running the religious moderation education in the program. These were lecturers, students and academic administrators. The lecturers were also involved since they were directly involved in ensuring that the goals of the curriculum were translated into classroom practice. The inclusion of students was due to their being the main beneficiaries of the pedagogical interventions and those who could respond to how moderation values were manifested and construed during learning processes. Academic administrators were added since they had a say in the curriculum choices and institutional policy pathways that influenced the overall educational context. Such a participant composition enabled the study to go beyond a single lens and to investigate the phenomenon on a policy, pedagogical, and student experience level in a comprehensive manner.

In depth interviews, classroom observations and document analysis were used as a means to get a rich and triangulated description of the case. The importance of the application of various techniques was due to the fact that the study was supposed to comprehend both formal institutional commitments and real pedagogical enactment. Instead of using a single source of evidence, the study combined verbal testimonies, classroom observation, and institutional documents. This mix contributed to the increased credibility of the results and allowed drawing a more detailed comparison between what the institution planned to promote and what happened in the field.

Lecturers, students, and the academic administrators were interviewed in depth to find out their understanding of religious moderation, as well as their experiences with its application in the Islamic Religious Education program. The interviews were conducted in a semi structured format in order to ensure that the important issues could be addressed uniformly among the participants and yet give the participants room to expound on their own experiences, understanding, and anxieties. Discussions in the interview centered on the integration of the curriculum, methods of teaching, interaction in the classroom, institutional support, and perceived challenges in enhancing moderation values. This format allowed the study to not only take up institutional accounts but also the tensions, negotiations and practical judgments that inform the teaching and reception of religious moderation in the daily life of the academia.

The classroom observations were conducted in Islamic Religious Education courses to study the implementation of moderation value in the teaching and learning processes. Observation was not employed as a mere confirmation of the interview statements but instead to record interactional dynamics that are in most cases hard to reproduce using retrospective accounts alone. The communication styles of lecturers, how discussions were managed, student participation opportunities, how religious differences were accommodated when discussing in the classroom and the degree to which the learning activities were conducive towards critical and respectful student involvement were given a special focus. The study managed to investigate whether moderation was introduced as abstract discourse or it was embedded within the real pedagogical practice with the help of observation.

The analysis of documents was performed in order to review the formal integration of religious moderation values into the educational framework of the program. The materials were curriculum materials, course syllabi, and institution policy documents pertaining to learning design and academic direction. This step was necessary since it enabled the research to determine the framing of moderation at the level of learning outcomes, course content, and institutional expectations and then determine the extent to which those intentions were translated into teaching practice. The analysis of documents also formed a significant point of comparison of the institutional commitments and classroom realities and the experiences of the participants. By doing so it did not consider moderation as a discursive statement but examined its textual and structural existence in the program.

Data collection was an iterative and responsive process and not strictly linear. Initial findings using the document and preliminary interviews were used to guide the later observations and follow up questioning to ensure that the issues raised could be examined in more detail. This method was significant since the dynamics of religious moderation implementation is influenced by the interaction of institutional design, lecturer agency, and student reactions, which tend to emerge better as the field is engaged. The study could refine its focus but still had something to hold to as the study was capable of informing the stages of data collection of the study. The iterative process also assisted the researcher to reinforce patterns that kept reoccurring across groups of participants and data sources as well as contrasting perspectives.

Thematic analysis was applied to analyze the collected data in a systematic way by means of coding, categorization, and development of the themes. The analysis process commenced by reading of interview transcripts, observations notes and documents repeatedly to gain familiarity with the entire dataset, as well as to maintain contextual meanings prior to formal coding. The second step was to create the first codes based on meaningful parts of information regarding curriculum integration, pedagogical planning, institutional support, student reactions, and implementation issues. These codes were then cross-source matched and then categorized into larger groups in terms of conceptual similarity and empirical recurrence.

As the analysis was going on, the categories became more narrow, i.e., formed the themes that reflected the main patterns of the case at the same time without ignoring the significant differences among participants and settings. The development of the themes was not considered a strictly mechanical sorting activity. Rather, themes were seen through the prism of the study objectives and the educational context of Islamic higher education in a plural and digital age. This inference allowed the results to go beyond description and to a description of how religious moderation is operationalized and why some strategies seem more or more challenging to maintain. Thematic analysis thus served not only to categorize data but also to

relate institutional intention, pedagogical process, and educational outcome in a logical analytical exposition.

## Results and Discussion

### Curriculum Integration of Religious Moderation Values

The results indicate that religious moderation has been entrenched intentionally as a part of the formal curriculum of the Islamic Religious Education program at UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. Instead of being presented as a secondary subject or an auxiliary theme, moderation is incorporated into the overall educational framework that puts the intellectual and moral perspective of the program into place. As shown in the analysis of the documents on the curriculum and syllabi of the courses, the values of tolerance, ethical responsibility, open to difference, and peaceful coexistence are spread over multiple courses and learning outcomes. This trend can be understood to imply that moderation is not as a one-time discussion that is presented only when it is necessary, but rather as an orientation that students are supposed to approach religious knowledge. One of the academic administrators described it as,

*“We do not treat religious moderation as an additional topic that appears only in one course. It is embedded across the curriculum so that students encounter these values repeatedly in different learning contexts.”*

This curricular orientation is even more apparent when particular subjects are looked into further. At Akhlaq Islamiyah, moderation is taught in the form of talks about moral character, interpersonal ethics and responsible behavior in the social life. Comparative Religion exposes the students to the diversity of religion in a framework that not only promotes understanding but also avoids suspicion and judgment. Such courses are not only transfers of knowledge regarding the ideas of religion, but also preparation of more open and reflective and ethically based ways of thinking and relating. The interviewed lecturers also affirmed that these courses were purposefully created so that the students would get out of these strict interpretations as well as to get to know the Islamic teaching concerning the realities of a plural society. As one lecturer said,

*“In courses such as Akhlaq Islamiyah and Comparative Religion, we try to show that respect for difference is not outside Islamic teaching. It is part of the ethical substance of Islam itself.”*

These findings suggest that religious moderation has been framed as an integral dimension of Islamic education itself, rather than as an external value that is attached to it from outside.

### Pedagogical Approaches in Teaching Religious Moderation

Although the formal position of moderation is defined in curriculum documents, the practice in the classroom shows how these values are applied to the daily pedagogy. The empirical evidence indicates that dialogic and participatory instruction methods are extensively applied by lecturers to develop moderation in manners which are intellectually significant and socially constructive. Class lessons were often structured in terms of discussions in groups, reflective questions, and directed debates on modern religious topics. The strategies provided a learning environment where students were motivated to express themselves, listen to others, and discuss disagreement without making it personal. In this respect, moderation was not only introduced as something to be learned, but also implemented through the very system of classroom communication. As one of the lecturers mentioned,

*“I do not ask students to think exactly the same way. What I ask is that they explain their views with responsibility, listen to others seriously, and learn how to disagree without hostility.”*

This method of pedagogy is particularly significant when the conversation gets to a sensitive or potentially divisive subject. Lecturer interviews indicate that the aspect of moderation teaching should not only be based on subject knowledge, but also a keen understanding of the emotional and ideological reaction of the students to disputed matters. This is why lecturers said that they deliberately redirect the discussion out of a closed language of doctrinal excellence and into ethical contemplation, social duty and the ramifications of exclusionary mindsets. Observations in the classroom also revealed that the students were continuously prompted to provide reasons to substantiate their arguments in a more thoughtful and respectful way, which eventually conditioned a more cautious and prudent type of involvement. Another lecturer remarked,

*“If sensitive issues are discussed only in a doctrinal tone, students may become defensive. That is why I guide the discussion toward ethics, consequences, and social responsibility.”*

What emerges from these findings is a picture of pedagogy in which moderation is cultivated as a lived academic practice, carried through tone, interaction, and the ethical management of difference.

### ***Interfaith Dialogue and Experiential Learning Activities***

Outside the classroom, the results show that interfaith dialogue is an important factor that enhances the knowledge of students on religious moderation. Students interviewed indicate that the structured dialogue experiences with individuals of other religious orientations gave them a valuable experiential component that could not be adequately substituted by classroom discussion, only. These experiences brought religious diversity closer, more human, and complicated to a number of students. Tolerance was no longer being taken as mere abstract notion one has to memorize but rather a practical attitude that should be practiced in actual situations when one faces other people. One student reflected,

*“Before joining the dialogue sessions, I understood tolerance mostly as a concept from class. After hearing directly from people with different religious backgrounds, I began to understand diversity as a real human experience.”*

This experiential aspect was also strengthened with the activities of community service and other social interactions where the student was exposed in plural social environments. The records and the interview data show that students engaged in collaborative activities in communities of diverse backgrounds where they needed to work, respectfully communicate, and respond to social realities that could not be simplified solely in terms of doctrines. In such situations, moderation was practiced and not just talked about as a perfect thing to do. Students were exposed not to difference as an object but to the realities of social life where they were expected to empathize, cooperate, and show emotional maturity. As some other student remarked,

*“When we worked with people from different communities during social activities, I realized that cooperation is possible even when beliefs are different. That experience changed the way I see religious difference.”*

These findings suggest that experiential learning serves as an important extension of formal instruction, allowing moderation to take shape as a social and ethical competence rather than remaining at the level of discourse.

### ***Student Perspectives and Internalization of Moderation Values***

According to the interviews with the students, the internalization of moderation values is a gradual process that occurs with the constant exposure to new visions, dialogic learning, and reflective academic practice. The realization that, prior to joining a university, their views on religion were molded by comparatively homogenous contexts where difference was seldom experienced in any meaningful manner was attributed by many students. It was during the course of the program that they started to move through that classroom discussions, course content, and engagement with peers and communities of other backgrounds started to rock the previously held assumptions and create space in which more complicated modes of thought could emerge. This change was not said to be sudden or dramatic, but a gradual process of education of perceiving the life of religion in wider and more socially based dimensions. One student said,

*“At the beginning, I was used to seeing religion only from the environment where I grew up. In class discussions, I slowly learned that being firm in faith does not mean rejecting every difference.”*

The fact that students did not refer to moderation as a watering down of the religious commitment is what makes this finding especially important. On the contrary, many of them understood it as a more mature and responsible way of living out that commitment. This interpretation is supported by the observational data which indicate that the students were more and more involved in classroom interactions in a more cautious, respectful and listening manner. This does not imply that differences have vanished and students have become homogenous in their opinions. Instead, it shows that they were getting better able to sustain conviction along with openness, and to be able to voice disagreement without falling into hostility. One student explained, as follows:

*“For me, moderation does not weaken religious commitment. It teaches us how to practice religion with wisdom, respect, and awareness of living in a diverse society.”*

In this respect, the program appears to contribute not simply to knowledge acquisition, but to the formation of a more balanced religious subjectivity.

### ***Challenges in Implementing Religious Moderation***

Nevertheless, the results also help to understand that realization of religious moderation is not the easy task. Among the most evident challenges that were identified during the interviews is that of the various ideological backgrounds that students enter the university with. Lecturers have said that certain students come in with hard-core interpretations on religion that were developed way back before they came to formal higher education. In the classroom this may manifest in the form of unease when it comes to open discussion or opposition to differing opinions or distrust of the interpretation that may seem to be too inclusive. This makes the activity of lecturers difficult since moderation cannot just be passed across as information. It should be developed in a process that tends to be lengthy, relational and educative. As one of the lecturers remarked,

*“Some students come to university with views that are already quite rigid. They are not always ready to discuss difference openly, so the process requires patience and repeated engagement.”*

This problem is even more complicated when the media environment at large is considered. Students and lecturers acknowledged that social media has a powerful effect on the way religious ideas are perceived, reproduced, and enhanced emotionally. The simplified claims, polarizing narratives, and highly affective content that is disseminated through digital platforms can be a challenge to the more deliberate and thought-provoking work of academic learning. Here, lecturers are not simply teaching in the classroom, but are also responding to potent flows of discourse that are forming students outside the confines of the institutions. One lecturer added,

*“The classroom is not the only space shaping students’ perspectives. Social media often brings narratives that are emotional, polarizing, and much easier for students to absorb than careful academic discussion.”*

In addition to these external pressures, the findings also point to institutional constraints such as uneven lecturer readiness and limited pedagogical support. Altogether, these realities show that moderation education takes place within a complex social field and cannot rely on classroom instruction alone.

### ***Institutional Opportunities for Strengthening Religious Moderation***

Despite the obstacles that are noted in the findings, there are also significant opportunities that can be used to empower the institutional role of the university in enhancing moderation. The interviews with academic leaders show that the development of lecturer capacity can be one of the most important priorities. Lecturers need more than intentions since moderation usually entails negotiating delicate debate, dealing with conflict and responding thoughtfully to ideological dissonance. They require the long-term professional assistance providing them with pedagogical strategies and conceptual clarity as well as confidence in managing challenging classroom situations. According to one of the academic leaders,

*“Faculty development is essential because moderation cannot depend only on personal initiative. Lecturers need continuous support to manage sensitive discussions with confidence and balance.”*

This suggests that the future of moderation education depends not only on curriculum design, but also on how effectively institutions invest in the people who bring that curriculum to life.

Simultaneously, the results imply that even the curriculum can still be enriched and extended. The value of enhancing course materials in the domain of interfaith engagement, ethical citizenship, and critical digital literacy can be identified based on interviews and documentation. This enrichment would make moderation education more attentive to the realities students experience within and without the university. Interestingly, the digital technology is also represented in the findings as a challenge but also as a potential resource. Online spaces can be used as a platform of dialogue, cooperation, and involvement of more students in discussing diversity and coexistence, in case approached with intentionality. As still another administrator remarked,

*“Digital platforms should not be seen only as a source of risk. They can also become spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and wider student engagement if they are used intentionally.”*

In this regard, the university has the opportunity to extend moderation education beyond conventional classroom boundaries and to cultivate a more connected, relevant, and socially engaged form of Islamic learning.

### ***The Role of Islamic Education in Fostering a Moderate Academic Culture***

When these various strands of evidence are put in the combination, the results lead into a wider inference regarding the impact of Islamic education in the institute. The Islamic education within this program does not serve as a simple transfer of the doctrinal knowledge or ritual understanding. Instead, it is an educative space where students are encouraged to become ethical, socially responsible, and able to live positively with difference. This expanded purpose can be seen in the correspondence between the content of the curriculum, the teaching activities, co-curricular activities as well as the institutional aspirations. Moderation is thus not a short-term project or a slogan, but a culture of academic life that is being fostered in a variety of aspects of university life. One lecturer emphasized,

*“Islamic education should not only teach students what is religiously correct, but also how to live those values with compassion, balance, and responsibility in a plural society.”*

This larger vision of education comes out in the manner the students explain what they have learned in the program. Through the reflections, they indicate that Islamic education has aided them to relate religious dedication to the realities of coexistence in a society of diversity. They do not merely talk about what they know, but also what type of a person they are becoming in the process of learning. In this regard, the value of the program is not only on its academic contents, but also on its role in producing graduates who are not only reflective and socially inclusive, but also ready to live religious life in a manner that is not only principled, but also peaceful. One of the students commented,

*“What I learned from these classes is that Islamic education is not only about knowledge. It is also about how to become a person who can live peacefully and respectfully with others.”*

These findings affirm that Islamic education at the university plays a vital role in fostering a moderate academic culture that is intellectually grounded, ethically serious, and socially responsive.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the integration of religious moderation within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon reflects a deliberate institutional strategy rather than a symbolic policy. This result supports previous studies highlighting the strategic role of PTKIN in mainstreaming moderation values through curriculum design and academic culture (Amal, 2021; Malik & Busrah, 2021). Unlike approaches that position moderation as a standalone course, the integrated model found in this study aligns with earlier arguments that moderation should permeate core Islamic disciplines to be effectively internalized (Sugiarti & Roqib, 2021). However, this finding also challenges studies suggesting that moderation education often remains fragmented or program-based within Islamic higher education institutions. The embedded approach observed in this case suggests a more sustainable and systemic model of moderation education.

The pedagogical practices identified in this study such as dialogical learning, critical discussion, and experiential engagement reinforce prior research emphasizing the importance of interactive and anthropological teaching approaches in preventing religious extremism (Rahman et al., 2023; Royani, 2021). These findings are consistent with studies on Islamic education in the digital era, which stress the need for adaptive teaching strategies to address ideological complexity and pluralism (Aprillia & Iryanti, 2024). Nevertheless, the study reveals that pedagogical effectiveness depends heavily on lecturers' facilitation skills, echoing concerns raised by Afifah (2025) and Sofyan et al (2022) regarding disparities in faculty

preparedness. This indicates that pedagogical innovation alone is insufficient without sustained professional development and institutional support.

The prominence of interfaith dialogue and community-based learning in this study corroborates earlier findings that experiential learning plays a critical role in cultivating tolerance and empathy among students (Safitri et al., 2023; Supriandi et al., 2023). These practices align with research asserting that Islamic education must function as a bridge between religious teachings and social realities in plural societies (Ilyas & Maknun, 2023). At the same time, the findings extend prior scholarship by demonstrating that structured interfaith engagement within a digital-based university context can effectively translate moderation values into lived experience. This challenges assumptions that digital learning environments limit affective and social dimensions of religious education.

The challenges identified in this study particularly student resistance, social media influence, and external ideological pressures are consistent with broader findings on the vulnerabilities of Islamic education in the digital age (Hasanah & Sukri, 2023; Sugiyono & Khojir, 2021). Social media's role in amplifying intolerant narratives confirms concerns raised by earlier studies about the difficulty of countering radical content through formal education alone. However, this study adds nuance by showing that resistance is not necessarily permanent but can be mitigated through sustained dialogue and reflective pedagogy. This finding contrasts with more pessimistic views that portray conservative student attitudes as largely immutable.

Finally, the strategic position of the PAI program highlighted in this study reinforces existing scholarship that views Islamic Religious Education as a central instrument for character formation and social cohesion (Hakkurahmy, 2023; Lubis, 2025). The findings support the argument that PAI can function as a moral and civic foundation capable of responding to globalization, pluralism, and ideological polarization (Fadillah et al., 2025). At the same time, the study underscores the need for PAI to continuously adapt through inclusive curriculum development, digital literacy integration, and collaborative partnerships. In this sense, the findings contribute to the growing discourse that positions Islamic education not merely as religious instruction but as a transformative force for fostering a moderate and resilient society.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of religious moderation values within Islamic Religious Education at UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon has been implemented in a systematic and comprehensive manner. Religious moderation is embedded across the curriculum, pedagogical practices, and academic culture through dialogical teaching, experiential learning, and interfaith engagement. These strategies contribute to the development of students' moderate religious understanding, critical awareness, and social sensitivity. The findings demonstrate that Islamic education, when designed inclusively and contextually, can effectively function as a medium for fostering tolerance and balanced religious perspectives in a pluralistic society.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study also identifies ongoing challenges related to student resistance, uneven faculty preparedness, and the influence of digital media and external ideological pressures. These challenges indicate that the implementation of religious moderation requires continuous institutional commitment, particularly in strengthening faculty development, curriculum innovation, and digital literacy integration. Therefore, sustained collaboration between educational institutions, policymakers, and community stakeholders is essential to ensure the long-term effectiveness of religious moderation education. Future research is encouraged to explore comparative contexts and longitudinal

impacts to further enrich the discourse on Islamic education and religious moderation in higher education.

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