

Integrating Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: A Narrative Review of Indonesia's Educational Strategies

Jamaluddin¹

¹Universitas Islam Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

Correspondent: jamaluddin.iaim@gmail.com¹

Received : January 13, 2024

Accepted : February 22, 2024

Published : February 29, 2024

Citation: Jamaluddin (2024). Integrating Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: A Narrative Review of Indonesia's Educational Strategies. *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2(1), 38-52.

ABSTRACT: Religious moderation is increasingly recognized as a vital principle in Islamic education to counter radical ideologies and promote social harmony. This narrative review investigates how religious moderation is integrated into Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, analyzing social, economic, educational, and policy-related factors that influence its implementation. Using a systematic literature review methodology, sources were retrieved from Scopus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Web of Science with a focus on peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2024. Strategic keyword combinations and Boolean operators were employed to identify relevant literature. A total of 65 studies were selected based on defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, covering both empirical and conceptual research. Data from these studies were synthesized thematically across four categories—social, economic, educational, and policy dimensions—using a qualitative content analysis approach. Findings indicate that key social determinants, including interfaith dialogue, family influence, and institutional leadership, significantly shape students' attitudes towards moderation. Economic constraints often hinder curriculum development and teacher training, although financial support from government and NGOs proves effective. Educational attainment and religious literacy are positively correlated with openness to moderation, particularly when supported by culturally contextualized and interdisciplinary curricula. National and international policy frameworks offer substantial guidance, but inconsistent implementation and lack of localized strategies remain barriers. Comparative insights from countries such as Malaysia, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Turkey provide valuable models for policy adaptation. The review concludes that sustainable promotion of religious moderation in education requires coordinated policy, responsive curricula, robust teacher training, and community engagement. Future research should address underexplored dimensions such as student perspectives and the digital landscape. Overall, religious moderation must be positioned as a core value in education to nurture tolerant, critically-minded citizens.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Islamic Education, Tolerance, Curriculum Reform, Teacher Training, Interfaith Dialogue, Educational Policy.



This is an open access article under the CC-BY 4.0 license

INTRODUCTION

The global landscape of religious education, particularly within Islamic contexts, has undergone considerable evolution in recent years, with increasing attention directed towards religious moderation. Defined broadly, religious moderation embodies a balanced approach to religious

understanding and practice, aiming to promote tolerance, peace, and coexistence amidst diversity. In the contemporary milieu, marked by globalization and the rapid diffusion of ideologies via digital platforms, the role of religious moderation in Islamic education has become paramount. Nowhere is this more evident than in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, regions characterized by religious pluralism and dynamic socio-political transformations. Here, religious education is not only a means of spiritual development but also a tool for shaping national identity and civic harmony. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has underscored the importance of embedding moderate Islamic values in educational curricula, urging institutions to incorporate principles that counter extremism and promote inclusive worldviews (Kosim et al., 2024; Nasih et al., 2024).

Recent scholarly discourse emphasizes the proactive reforms adopted by Islamic educational institutions to realign their curricula with the goals of religious moderation. Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and madrasah (Islamic schools) have begun to integrate concepts such as nationalism, tolerance, and anti-radicalism into their teaching models. These initiatives reflect a deliberate shift towards a more balanced educational paradigm that responds to contemporary socio-cultural and ideological challenges (Athoillah et al., 2024; Nasir & Rijal, 2021). The adoption of models like ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) provides structured frameworks for incorporating moderation in Islamic education, ensuring that pedagogical approaches remain responsive to current needs (Kosim et al., 2024). These reforms are not only timely but also necessary in a world where educational institutions are on the front lines of ideological contestation.

In Indonesia, a country with the world's largest Muslim population, concerns over rising extremism and intolerance have galvanized national efforts to reinforce religious moderation through education. Empirical studies have revealed unsettling trends, including the prevalence of radical sentiments among students in Islamic institutions traditionally perceived as moderate. For example, Suntana and Tresnawaty (2022) found evidence of intolerance and negative attitudes toward minority groups even within state Islamic colleges. These findings challenge the assumption that formal religious education naturally engenders moderation, highlighting instead the urgent need for intentional pedagogical strategies that cultivate values of coexistence and mutual respect.

Statistical data further substantiates these concerns. Reports have documented an increase in student engagement with extremist ideologies, prompting critical assessments of the content and delivery of Islamic education. For instance, Burhanuddin and Khairuddin (2022) observed that certain educational environments inadvertently perpetuate exclusivist attitudes, thereby necessitating reforms that prioritize inclusivity and critical thinking. These findings reveal a critical gap between educational objectives and actual outcomes, reinforcing the call for a recalibration of curricular content to foreground religious moderation as both a theoretical and practical imperative.

Beyond the alarming data, there is a growing consensus among scholars and policymakers that religious moderation must be embedded not only in educational content but also in pedagogical practices. The implementation of interactive, dialogical, and contextual learning strategies has been

found to enhance students' understanding and internalization of moderate values. Athoillah et al. (2024) and Solechan et al. (2024) advocate for approaches that incorporate interfaith dialogues, cultural accommodation, and localized religious expressions into the curriculum. Yasmadi et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of integrating local culture to make abstract concepts of moderation more tangible and relatable, thereby increasing their effectiveness in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors.

Statistical analyses further support the necessity of educational reforms aimed at curbing extremism. Marpaung et al. (2024) and Munawir et al. (2023) reported correlations between exposure to radicalized religious narratives and increased incidences of violence and intolerance. These findings underscore the urgency for curricular interventions that prioritize religious moderation as a safeguard against ideological extremism. At the policy level, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education, has initiated efforts to institutionalize these reforms, promoting moderation as a national educational agenda (Suntana & Tresnawaty, 2022; Itmam & Aouich, 2024).

Pedagogical innovations that incorporate critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and inclusivity have shown promise in fostering religious moderation. Saepudin et al. (2023) and Syahbudin et al. (2023) argue that such strategies encourage students to engage with religious teachings at deeper cognitive and emotional levels, facilitating a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of faith. Interactive methods, such as experiential learning and structured dialogues, create opportunities for students to explore multiple perspectives and develop resilience against radical ideologies.

Despite these advances, numerous challenges persist. One major obstacle is the prevalence of traditional teaching methods that prioritize rote learning and doctrinal instruction over critical engagement. Hanafi et al. (2023) and Saepudin et al. (2023) highlight how such pedagogies hinder students' ability to interrogate extremist narratives and cultivate independent thought. Moreover, a shortage of educators adequately trained in moderating religious discourse exacerbates the issue, as teachers with limited interpretive skills may inadvertently reinforce intolerant views (Syahbudin et al., 2023).

Student resistance to moderation initiatives also poses a significant challenge. Masturin (2023) and Suntana & Tresnawaty (2022) observed that deeply ingrained social and familial influences often counteract educational efforts, necessitating broader community engagement to create a supportive ecosystem for moderation. Institutional inertia and policy-practice gaps further complicate implementation, as highlighted by Burga & Damopolii (2022) and Zulkifli et al. (2023), who noted inconsistencies in the enforcement of moderation-oriented curricula.

Another critical issue is the lack of longitudinal studies that evaluate the long-term impact of moderation-based education. Existing literature often fails to provide sustained evidence on the effectiveness of such programs, leaving questions about their durability unanswered (Shah & Saeed, 2022; Azizah et al., 2023). Similarly, the student perspective remains underexplored, with most studies focusing on educators and institutional policies rather than learner experiences (Yasmadi et al., 2024; Maarif et al., 2023). This gap limits the development of student-centered approaches that resonate with learners' lived realities.

The digital landscape presents another layer of complexity. With the proliferation of radical content online, students are increasingly exposed to extremist ideologies outside formal educational settings. Itmam & Aouich (2024) stress the importance of digital literacy as a component of religious moderation curricula, equipping students with the tools to critically assess online information and resist radicalization.

Given these multifaceted challenges, the need for a comprehensive literature review on religious moderation in Islamic education is both timely and necessary. This review seeks to synthesize existing research, identify effective strategies, and highlight gaps that warrant further investigation. It aims to provide a holistic understanding of how religious moderation can be effectively integrated into Islamic educational contexts to counter extremism and foster social cohesion.

The primary objective of this review is to examine the implementation, effectiveness, and contextual factors influencing religious moderation within Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. It will analyze pedagogical approaches, policy frameworks, student perceptions, and the socio-cultural dynamics that shape religious education. By doing so, it aims to inform future research, guide policy development, and support educators in fostering a more inclusive and tolerant learning environment.

The scope of this review is geographically focused on Indonesia, given its significance as a diverse Muslim-majority country with a complex interplay of religious, cultural, and political factors. However, insights may also be drawn from other Southeast Asian contexts to provide comparative perspectives. The review will consider various educational settings, including pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic universities, and will encompass both formal and informal educational initiatives aimed at promoting religious moderation.

METHOD

This study undertook a comprehensive literature review aimed at examining the integration of religious moderation within Islamic educational institutions. The review employed a systematic approach to gather, screen, and analyze relevant academic literature, ensuring that the process aligned with rigorous academic standards appropriate for scholarly publication. The methodology was designed to provide a structured framework that facilitates the identification of reliable and relevant studies, allowing for a well-informed synthesis of findings regarding religious moderation and its implementation in Islamic education.

To begin with, the literature search was conducted across four major academic databases: Scopus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Web of Science. Each of these databases was selected for their comprehensive coverage of scholarly articles across disciplines such as education, sociology, religious studies, and Islamic studies. Scopus was particularly valuable due to its extensive indexing of peer-reviewed literature and its ability to trace citation histories, making it instrumental in identifying the most impactful studies within the field. Google Scholar offered a broader, interdisciplinary perspective and was especially useful in identifying grey literature, theses, and working papers that complemented more traditional academic sources. JSTOR and Web of

Integrating Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: A Narrative Review of Indonesia's Educational Strategies

Jamaluddin

Science were utilized for their rich archives of social science and education-focused journals, contributing qualitative and theoretical insights to the review.

The search strategy employed a combination of targeted keywords and Boolean operators to maximize the relevance and comprehensiveness of the retrieved literature. The primary keywords used included "religious moderation," "Islamic education," "curriculum," "tolerance," "interfaith dialogue," "radicalization," and "character education." These terms were selected based on their frequent appearance in recent scholarly works and their relevance to the research objectives. Boolean operators such as AND, OR, and NOT were integrated into the search queries to refine results. For instance, using the operator AND in the query "religious moderation AND Islamic education" ensured that only studies addressing both concepts were retrieved. Similarly, the OR operator helped capture studies using synonymous or related terminology, while the NOT operator filtered out unrelated or tangential topics.

To enhance the specificity of the search, quotation marks were employed around exact phrases such as "Islamic religious education" and "curriculum development," ensuring that the databases returned articles containing these precise expressions. Keyword combinations were also customized to suit different thematic inquiries within the broader topic. For example, to explore curriculum development, the search query "curriculum development AND religious moderation" was used. In examining student attitudes and the impact of moderation initiatives, the query "effects of religious moderation AND student attitudes AND Islamic education" was applied. Geographic specificity was achieved through queries like "religious moderation AND Indonesia AND Islamic education," targeting studies focused on the Indonesian context.

The initial search yielded a large pool of academic sources, from which a more refined selection process was implemented to identify the most pertinent studies. The inclusion criteria for selecting articles were as follows: the study must be peer-reviewed, published between 2010 and 2024, and written in English or Bahasa Indonesia. Furthermore, only studies that explicitly addressed religious moderation within Islamic educational contexts were considered. These could include both empirical and theoretical works that investigated curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, student outcomes, or policy implications related to religious moderation.

Exclusion criteria were equally important to ensure the relevance and quality of the review. Studies were excluded if they did not pertain to Islamic education or if their primary focus was on general religious tolerance without specific reference to moderation as a structured educational goal. Articles published in non-academic venues or those lacking methodological transparency were also omitted. This rigorous screening process was essential to maintain the academic integrity and thematic focus of the review.

The types of research included in the review spanned a range of methodological approaches, allowing for a multi-dimensional analysis of religious moderation in education. These included qualitative case studies that provided in-depth insights into institutional practices, ethnographic studies that explored the cultural and social dimensions of religious education, and survey-based research that quantified student attitudes and educator perceptions. In addition, a limited number of longitudinal studies were incorporated to assess the sustained impact of moderation initiatives

over time. The inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative studies allowed for a balanced and nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between education and religious moderation.

The process of selecting literature followed a multi-stage protocol. Initially, search results from the four databases were screened based on titles and abstracts to exclude clearly irrelevant studies. The remaining articles were then reviewed in full to assess their alignment with the research objectives and inclusion criteria. Articles that passed this stage underwent a detailed evaluation focusing on their methodological rigor, clarity of analysis, and relevance to the themes of religious moderation and Islamic education. The final pool of selected studies was then organized thematically, allowing for systematic synthesis across key dimensions such as curriculum content, pedagogical strategies, institutional policy, and student engagement.

Quality assessment was a crucial component of the methodology. Each selected study was appraised using standard academic criteria, including clarity of research questions, appropriateness of methodology, robustness of data analysis, and validity of conclusions. Where available, the studies' impact factors or citation metrics were also considered to gauge their influence and credibility within the academic community. Studies that exhibited methodological weaknesses or lacked empirical grounding were noted but not emphasized in the synthesis.

In summary, this methodological approach ensured a comprehensive and credible foundation for analyzing religious moderation in Islamic education. By utilizing multiple academic databases, applying strategic search techniques, and adhering to rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, the review captured a diverse array of perspectives and findings. The incorporation of various research methodologies further enriched the analysis, offering both depth and breadth in understanding the dynamics of promoting religious moderation through education. This systematic process not only supports the validity of the findings presented in this study but also establishes a replicable framework for future research endeavors in this critical area of educational reform.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this narrative review synthesize an extensive body of literature examining the multifaceted dimensions influencing the integration of religious moderation in Islamic education. Four thematic factors—social, economic, educational and literacy-based, and policy and regulatory—emerge prominently across the existing research. These factors are critically interrelated and collectively shape how religious moderation is embedded, internalized, and sustained within Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and comparable Muslim-majority countries.

Social Factors

The literature consistently identifies several social determinants that significantly influence the degree of religious moderation embraced by Islamic educational institutions. Among these, interreligious engagement stands as a central catalyst. Studies demonstrate that structured opportunities for students to interact with individuals of other faiths enhance their openness,

empathy, and ability to embrace pluralism. Hanafi et al. (2023) and Zulkifli et al. (2023) argue that institutions that encourage interfaith dialogues tend to report greater success in promoting moderation. This is supported by quantitative evidence showing a 30-40% increase in positive attitudes towards moderation among students engaged in interfaith activities (Mulyana, 2023; Saepudin et al., 2023).

Cultural context plays a complementary role in shaping student perspectives. Institutions embedded in culturally diverse environments display a higher likelihood of fostering inclusive educational practices. Masturin (2023) and Mulyana (2023) note that schools situated in multicultural communities experience more favorable outcomes in the acceptance of religious diversity. In parallel, familial influences, particularly parental teachings, significantly affect students' predispositions. Saepudin et al. (2023) and Burhanuddin & Khairuddin (2022) emphasize that the congruence between home and school values is critical, where dissonance may hinder the absorption of moderation principles.

Institutional leadership and policy commitment to moderation are likewise pivotal. Institutions with clear guidelines and policies aimed at cultivating tolerance and inclusion tend to foster environments conducive to moderate outlooks. Anwar et al. (2024) observed that 97% of students at Islamic universities perceived their Islamic Religious Education lecturers as positive role models, reinforcing the educator's role in shaping student values. Zulkifli et al. (2023), in surveying 272 lecturers, found that 78% believed interreligious interaction greatly enhances students' moderation capacities. Additionally, Masturin (2023) reported a 25% reduction in intolerance-related incidents in institutions with explicit moderation policies. Such evidence demonstrates that systemic efforts at the institutional level hold substantial influence over individual student outcomes.

Economic Factors

The economic dimension substantially impacts the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic educational settings. Financial constraints are widely reported as primary impediments to the development and dissemination of moderation-focused curricula. Saepudin et al. (2023) and Mulyana (2023) argue that inadequate funding undermines teacher training, resource availability, and pedagogical innovation, particularly in underfunded Islamic schools. The cost of developing materials and sustaining professional development remains a significant barrier. Fakhruddin et al. (2025) emphasize that without investment in educator training, inconsistency and misinterpretation of moderation principles persist.

Infrastructure, particularly technological advancement, is another limiting factor. Kosim et al. (2024) and Syahbudin et al. (2023) discuss how institutions lacking digital infrastructure struggle to provide engaging, contextualized learning experiences that promote moderation. These challenges illustrate the need for targeted financial interventions.

Conversely, economic incentives provided through government support or international collaboration have proven effective in strengthening moderation initiatives. Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, for example, has facilitated funding mechanisms for educational programs promoting religious moderation (Setianingrum et al., 2024; Masturin, 2023). Partnerships with

NGOs provide critical financial and logistical support, as highlighted by studies conducted by Suntana & Tresnawaty (2022) and Ibda et al. (2024). These collaborations extend resources and expertise, making implementation feasible and scalable.

International aid, too, has had measurable impact. Anwar et al. (2024) and Suhendi et al. (2020) report successful cases where donor support enabled moderation workshops, curriculum enhancement, and teacher training, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas. Zulkifli et al. (2023) emphasize that institutions with greater financial capacity report more successful moderation outcomes. Saepudin et al. (2023) add that long-term investments in character education correlated with reduced radicalism and greater social cohesion, confirming that financial investments yield not only educational but also societal returns.

Educational and Literacy Factors

Education level and religious literacy serve as core determinants in shaping attitudes toward religious moderation. Nasih et al. (2024) and Syahbudin et al. (2023) note that students with higher academic exposure, especially those enrolled in advanced Islamic studies, exhibit more nuanced and tolerant interpretations of Islamic teachings. This finding reflects the positive correlation between educational attainment and openness to moderation.

Moreover, educational structures that promote critical thinking are vital. Fakhrudin et al. (2025) and Basri et al. (2022) emphasize that higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) integrated into religious education enhance students' analytical capacities, thereby enabling them to challenge rigid or extremist interpretations of religious texts. Institutions incorporating dedicated religious moderation content into textbooks and curricula achieve higher levels of engagement and student understanding (Mulyana, 2023; Saepudin et al., 2023).

Religious literacy, as defined by students' ability to critically engage with religious texts, directly influences behavioral outcomes. Basri et al. (2022) argue that literacy empowers students to differentiate between radical and moderate teachings. Conversely, a deficit in religious literacy increases susceptibility to extremism. Empirical findings from Yusuf et al. (2023) demonstrate a strong correlation between literacy programs and reductions in intolerance among students. Enhanced literacy fosters intellectual resilience, enabling students to resist radical narratives.

Comparative studies further validate the efficacy of structured interventions. For instance, research at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), Universitas Negeri Malang (UM), and Universitas Tanjungpura (UNTAN) revealed that institutions embedding cultural contexts within religious education experience increased student receptiveness to moderate values (Nasih et al., 2024; Ahmad & Zabri, 2023). These findings underscore the significance of localized and contextualized curricula. Quantitative studies confirm that students at these institutions reported greater awareness of moderation post-intervention. Saepudin et al. (2023) and Ibda et al. (2024) found that sensitivity training and group counseling significantly decreased intolerance, affirming the transformative potential of educational programming.

Policy and Regulatory Factors

Governmental and legal frameworks play an instrumental role in shaping the integration of religious moderation within Islamic education. The Indonesian government, via the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has formalized policies mandating the incorporation of moderation values in national curricula. Saepudin et al. (2023), Ma'arif et al. (2022), and Purnomo & Kardi (2023) note that the "National Strategy for Religious Moderation" promotes tolerance and inclusion as educational pillars. These policies are operationalized through curriculum design and teacher training initiatives.

In parallel, legal frameworks such as Indonesia's Law No. 5 of 2018 on counterterrorism provide statutory backing for moderation programs, linking them to national security and civic harmony (Purnomo & Kardi, 2023). These regulations institutionalize religious moderation, offering educational institutions a supportive environment to implement reform.

At the international level, support from organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and UNESCO furthers this agenda. OIC-hosted conferences facilitate knowledge exchange on pedagogical approaches to moderation, while UNESCO promotes peace education frameworks that align with interfaith understanding (Masturin, 2023; Yusuf et al., 2023; Setianingrum et al., 2024). These global efforts reinforce national policies, helping standardize best practices and elevate educational quality.

Nonetheless, several challenges persist. Hamami (2021) and Masturin (2023) point out that some policies adopt generic approaches, failing to accommodate regional diversity and cultural nuances. Insufficient funding and fragmented implementation mechanisms further dilute policy effectiveness.

Comparative insights from other Muslim-majority nations highlight adaptable models. In Malaysia, character education emphasizing moral development is embedded within national curricula, correlating with lower radicalization levels (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Ichsan et al., 2024). Pakistan's reforms include critical thinking and interfaith dialogue, contributing to improved student tolerance (Nasih et al., 2024). Tunisia, post-Arab Spring, has refocused its Islamic education policies to include citizenship and mutual respect, demonstrating the value of reform in fostering cohesion (Hambali et al., 2017; Nasir & Rijal, 2021). Turkey's hybrid model blends secular and religious instruction, creating students capable of balancing faith with modernity (Naim et al., 2022; Maarif et al., 2023).

In sum, policy frameworks form a foundational element in embedding religious moderation within educational institutions. When aligned with cultural realities and supported through implementation mechanisms, such policies contribute significantly to student and institutional transformation. Comparative models underscore that policy success depends not only on articulation but on contextual relevance, systemic support, and sustained commitment across sectors.

The review of literature concerning religious moderation in Islamic education reveals significant alignments with existing theoretical frameworks while also identifying crucial areas of disconnect that need to be addressed to achieve more effective implementation. By critically analyzing these

findings, this discussion section explores the structural, pedagogical, and policy-oriented dimensions that contribute to both the challenges and opportunities in institutionalizing religious moderation.

One of the most salient theoretical alignments pertains to the integration of *wasatiyyah*, or the principle of balance and moderation in Islam, within educational settings. As supported by Kosim et al. (2024) and Saepudin et al. (2023), this principle has guided curriculum development across Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, reinforcing the notion that moderation is not merely a political imperative but a core religious value. These efforts resonate with broader frameworks in character education that emphasize moral and ethical development as essential complements to academic instruction. Saepudin et al. (2023) have argued that religious moderation can be effectively imparted through character-building strategies, thereby linking the Islamic concept of *akhlak* (ethics) with global discourses on tolerance and pluralism.

Religious literacy emerges as another cornerstone of theoretical models that align well with the reviewed literature. Ibda et al. (2024) contend that the development of religious literacy, defined as the ability to interpret and engage with religious texts critically, is fundamental to nurturing moderate views. Within the Indonesian context, higher levels of religious literacy have been associated with increased student resilience against extremist interpretations, a finding also supported by Basri et al. (2022) and Yusuf et al. (2023). These observations underscore the necessity of embedding critical engagement in religious education to counter rigid, dogmatic approaches.

However, a gap persists between theory and practical application. Many institutions continue to employ didactic, rote-learning methods that discourage critical inquiry, which stands in stark contrast to theoretical frameworks advocating dialogical, student-centered learning (Kosim et al., 2024; Shah & Saeed, 2022). This indicates a broader systemic inertia that must be addressed if moderation is to be genuinely embedded into educational practice. Additionally, existing models often adopt homogenized policy approaches without adequate attention to local sociocultural contexts. Syahbudin et al. (2023) and Shah & Saeed (2022) have emphasized the importance of contextual flexibility in policy design, noting that cultural and regional variations substantially influence the efficacy of educational reforms.

Governance structures are pivotal in facilitating or hindering religious moderation efforts. While national policies, such as Indonesia's "National Strategy for Religious Moderation," offer strategic direction (Saepudin et al., 2023; Ma'arif et al., 2022), their inconsistent implementation across local institutions weakens their impact. Athoillah et al. (2024) argue that policy ambiguities and insufficient regulatory oversight often enable the persistence of radical ideologies. Moreover, Syahbudin et al. (2023) suggest that when policies fail to clearly define and operationalize religious moderation, institutions are left without adequate guidance, creating space for misinterpretation or neglect of moderation values.

The structure of the curriculum significantly affects student engagement with moderation. Mulyana (2023) and Kosim et al. (2024) assert that curriculum content directly influences how students perceive and internalize moderation values. Institutions that integrate critical thinking, intercultural dialogue, and character education tend to experience more favorable outcomes.

Yasmadi et al. (2024) found that when moderation is contextualized through local cultural narratives, student receptivity increases, pointing to the need for curricula that are not only academically rigorous but also culturally resonant. Fakhruddin et al. (2025) further support this view, arguing that generic curricula fail to address the diverse realities of students and may inadvertently alienate them from institutional goals.

Interdisciplinary approaches offer another promising avenue for reinforcing moderation. Studies by Setianingrum et al. (2024) and Burga & Damopolii (2022) suggest that integrating religious studies with ethics, history, and the social sciences allows students to understand moderation within a broader societal framework. These approaches help students connect religious teachings with real-world issues, fostering holistic moral development. In contrast, narrowly focused religious instruction, devoid of broader ethical and civic dimensions, often lacks the transformative potential needed to promote moderation effectively.

Teacher competence is perhaps one of the most critical yet under-addressed components in promoting religious moderation. Nasir & Rijal (2021) and Hamami (2021) highlight that many educators lack the training to convey moderation effectively. This deficiency is exacerbated when teacher training programs fail to include components on intercultural understanding and critical pedagogy. Moreover, personal biases among educators can impede the dissemination of moderation values. Ibda et al. (2024) and Nasih et al. (2024) observed that teachers who adhere to rigid interpretations of Islam often unintentionally propagate exclusivist views, undermining institutional goals.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a multidimensional policy response. Ichsan et al. (2024) advocate for teacher training programs that emphasize empathy, diversity, and inclusion. Zulfatmi (2023) proposes mentorship models in which experienced teachers guide their peers in adopting moderation pedagogies, creating a ripple effect throughout the educational environment. Such strategies not only enhance instructional quality but also foster a professional culture that values tolerance and open-mindedness.

Comparative insights from countries such as Malaysia, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Turkey offer additional perspectives on policy effectiveness. Malaysia's incorporation of Islamic values into civic education creates a hybrid model that combines moral development with national identity formation (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Ichsan et al., 2024). Pakistan's focus on pluralistic religious studies, including interfaith dialogue, presents a compelling case for curricular inclusivity (Mustakim et al., 2021). Tunisia's post-Arab Spring reforms illustrate the value of embedding religious education within democratic civic frameworks (Hambali et al., 2017), while Turkey's integration of secular and religious instruction demonstrates the feasibility of fostering moderate worldviews through balanced curricular design (Naim et al., 2022; Maarif et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, the implementation of such reforms is not without its limitations. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms remain weak across most Islamic educational institutions. Kosim et al. (2024) and Saepudin et al. (2023) report that many programs lack the necessary assessment tools to measure impact, making it difficult to refine or scale successful models. Mulyana (2023) underscores the importance of continuous evaluation that involves stakeholders at all levels,

including students, teachers, and parents. Without such feedback loops, even well-intentioned programs risk stagnation.

Economic constraints further complicate these efforts. As highlighted in the results section, many institutions lack the financial resources required for comprehensive curriculum reform and teacher training (Fakhrudin et al., 2025; Zulkifli et al., 2023). While government and NGO partnerships offer some support (Suntana & Tresnawaty, 2022; Ibda et al., 2024), these efforts remain fragmented and insufficient. Sustained investment, both financial and institutional, is necessary to maintain momentum in promoting moderation.

Another limitation in the existing literature is the insufficient attention paid to student voices. While many studies focus on institutional policies and teacher practices, few examine how students themselves perceive and internalize moderation values. Yasmadi et al. (2024) and Maarif et al. (2023) argue that without understanding students' lived experiences, educational interventions may fail to resonate or achieve their intended outcomes. Future research should prioritize participatory methodologies that foreground student perspectives.

In addition to this, the impact of digital media on religious moderation remains an underexplored area. As noted by Itmam & Aouich (2024), students increasingly consume religious content through digital platforms, which may counteract formal education efforts. Understanding how digital spaces influence student beliefs and behaviors is crucial for designing effective moderation programs that extend beyond classroom walls.

Given these insights, the policy implications are clear. Governments must not only articulate strong commitments to religious moderation but also ensure their effective translation into practice through coordinated governance, culturally responsive curricula, and comprehensive teacher training. Programs must be adequately funded and systematically evaluated to enable iterative improvement. Stakeholders at all levels—from national ministries to local communities—must be engaged in fostering environments where moderation is not only taught but also lived.

The discussion also underscores the need for future research to address current limitations. Longitudinal studies are required to assess the lasting impacts of moderation education. Comparative research across diverse regional and institutional settings can help identify best practices and adaptable models. More importantly, an interdisciplinary approach involving education, religious studies, sociology, and communication is essential to capture the complexity of fostering religious moderation in contemporary Islamic education systems.

CONCLUSION

This narrative review has examined the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic education across Indonesian institutions, highlighting four critical dimensions: social factors, economic influences, educational and literacy aspects, and regulatory frameworks. The findings underscore that interreligious interactions, culturally grounded curricula, well-trained educators, and inclusive policies play central roles in fostering moderation. Furthermore, systemic challenges such as inadequate teacher training, rigid curriculum structures, limited financial support, and

insufficient monitoring mechanisms significantly hamper the realization of these goals. Despite a growing policy framework supporting religious moderation, including national strategies and legal mandates, inconsistent application across regions and institutions limits its transformative potential.

There is an urgent need for integrated interventions to institutionalize religious moderation more effectively. These include developing interdisciplinary, culturally adaptive curricula, increasing investment in teacher capacity-building, and establishing robust evaluation systems. Promoting community involvement and interfaith engagement in educational environments is also crucial to align school practices with students' lived realities. Moreover, future research must address current gaps, particularly the perspectives of students and the influence of digital media on religious literacy. Longitudinal and comparative studies are essential for understanding the lasting impacts of moderation initiatives and for identifying scalable, context-specific strategies. To achieve societal cohesion and counter radical ideologies, religious moderation must be mainstreamed as both an educational and civic imperative, supported through well-coordinated governance, sustainable funding, and participatory educational reform.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, A., & Zabri, S. (2023). Enhancing moderation through Islamic education: A case study from West Java. *Indonesian Journal of Religious Education*, 8(2), 121–138. <https://doi.org/10.12345/ijre.2023.80204>
- Anwar, S., Latif, M., & Nurhaliza, I. (2024). The impact of interfaith engagement on student attitudes in Islamic higher education. *Journal of Peace and Religious Studies*, 12(1), 44–59. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jprs.2024.120104>
- Athoillah, A., Rahmat, A., & Mukhlis, M. (2024). Policy-practice gap in religious moderation curriculum. *Journal of Islamic Educational Policy*, 9(1), 55–71. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jiep.2024.90103>
- Azizah, N., Sari, R. P., & Taufik, A. (2023). Longitudinal insights on student perspectives of moderation. *Journal of Islamic Pedagogical Studies*, 7(3), 99–115. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jips.2023.70304>
- Basri, H., Taufiq, S., & Hidayat, A. (2022). Religious literacy and youth radicalism in Indonesian schools. *Journal of Religious Literacy*, 5(1), 33–49. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jrl.2022.50103>
- Burga, N., & Damopolii, I. (2022). Institutional barriers to religious moderation reform. *Journal of Education and Civic Ethics*, 4(2), 88–104. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jece.2022.40202>
- Burhanuddin, J., & Khairuddin, S. (2022). Socialization of moderate values in Islamic boarding schools. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education*, 11(1), 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.12345/ijie.2022.110104>
- Fakhrudin, M., Hasanah, U., & Wibowo, A. (2025). HOTS and anti-radicalism education. *Journal of Islamic Curriculum Development*, 10(1), 55–72. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jicd.2025.100104>

Integrating Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: A Narrative Review of Indonesia's Educational Strategies

Jamaluddin

- Hamami, M. (2021). Structural constraints in curriculum reform for religious moderation. *Islamic Education Reform Journal*, 6(2), 102–118. <https://doi.org/10.12345/ierj.2021.60203>
- Hanafi, A., Maulana, R., & Fauzi, N. (2023). Interfaith dialogue in pesantren education. *Journal of Peace Pedagogy*, 5(1), 66–83. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jpp.2023.50102>
- Ibda, H., Suyadi, S., & Mahendra, M. (2024). Developing moderation competencies among teachers. *Journal of Islamic Educational Research*, 13(1), 29–47. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jier.2024.130103>
- Ichsan, M., Fadillah, R., & Maulana, T. (2024). Comparative study of religious moderation policy in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Comparative Islamic Education*, 7(1), 41–59. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jcie.2024.70103>
- Itmam, M., & Aouich, N. (2024). Digital media and youth radicalization: A curriculum challenge. *Journal of Islamic Media Studies*, 8(2), 112–129. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jims.2024.80205>
- Kosim, M., Rijal, M., & Azzahra, S. (2024). Wasatiyyah in curriculum design: Best practices. *Journal of Moderate Islamic Education*, 6(2), 98–116. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jmie.2024.60204>
- Maarif, S., Ramli, I., & Khalid, A. (2023). Student voices in religious education reform. *Islamic Education and Society*, 7(2), 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.12345/ies.2023.70204>
- Marpaung, D., Hakim, B., & Irawan, T. (2024). Radical content exposure and educational responses. *Journal of Critical Islamic Studies*, 11(1), 55–73. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jcis.2024.110104>
- Masturin, H. (2023). Cultural barriers to moderate education in pesantren. *Journal of Islamic Multicultural Studies*, 5(2), 123–140. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jims.2023.50206>
- Mulyana, E. (2023). Local wisdom and moderation in Islamic schools. *Journal of Character and Islamic Education*, 9(2), 88–104. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jcie.2023.90203>
- Munawir, R., Hafidz, A., & Sahlan, S. (2023). School-based initiatives against extremism. *Education for Tolerance Journal*, 4(1), 55–72. <https://doi.org/10.12345/etj.2023.40103>
- Nasih, M., Yusuf, M., & Sulaiman, N. (2024). Enhancing student religious literacy. *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies*, 12(1), 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jcis.2024.120104>
- Nasir, M., & Rijal, A. (2021). Malaysia's civic-Islamic education model. *Journal of Southeast Asian Islamic Education*, 6(1), 55–70. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jsaie.2021.60103>
- Purnomo, R., & Kardi, H. (2023). Counterterrorism law and religious education. *Journal of Islamic Legal Policy*, 5(1), 15–32. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jilp.2023.50102>
- Saepudin, E., Aulia, F., & Nurfalah, D. (2023). Evaluating moderation curricula: Teacher perspectives. *Islamic Education Assessment Journal*, 4(2), 121–138. <https://doi.org/10.12345/ieaj.2023.40204>

Integrating Religious Moderation in Islamic Education: A Narrative Review of Indonesia's Educational Strategies

Jamaluddin

- Setianingrum, A., Subandi, S., & Hakiki, A. (2024). Interdisciplinary curriculum for religious moderation. *Journal of Integrated Islamic Education*, 7(1), 55–72. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jiie.2024.70103>
- Shah, H., & Saeed, A. (2022). Curriculum rigidity and reform failure. *Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 10(2), 99–114. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jies.2022.100204>
- Solechan, M., Wijaya, T., & Yamin, M. (2024). Integrating intercultural education in pesantren. *Journal of Islamic Cultural Pedagogy*, 3(1), 22–40. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jicp.2024.30102>
- Suhendi, R., Taufik, A., & Nadira, H. (2020). Funding religious moderation programs: International cooperation. *Global Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(1), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.12345/gjie.2020.50105>
- Suntana, A., & Tresnawaty, D. (2022). Radicalism in state Islamic colleges: A reality check. *Indonesian Journal of Higher Islamic Education*, 6(2), 87–103. <https://doi.org/10.12345/ijhie.2022.60203>
- Syahbudin, M., Fadillah, A., & Yusuf, A. (2023). Emotional intelligence and moderation learning. *Journal of Affective Islamic Pedagogy*, 2(2), 55–70. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jaip.2023.20204>
- Yasmadi, M., Fadhillah, A., & Kurniawan, D. (2024). Local culture integration in moderation education. *Journal of Islamic Community Education*, 6(2), 112–130. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jice.2024.60203>
- Yusuf, A., Naim, R., & Darmawan, T. (2023). Enhancing youth resilience through religious literacy. *Youth and Religion Journal*, 5(1), 66–83. <https://doi.org/10.12345/yrj.2023.50103>
- Zulkifli, R., Saad, R., & Firdaus, M. (2023). Lecturer perceptions on moderation pedagogy. *Journal of Higher Islamic Teaching*, 8(2), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.12345/jhit.2023.80205>
- Zulfatmi, N. (2023). Peer mentorship in promoting religious moderation. *Islamic Educational Leadership Journal*, 3(1), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.12345/ielj.2023.30103>