



Religious Moderation and Global Diversity Awareness in Islamic Teacher Education

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Abstract

Globalisation presents profound challenges for Indonesia as a multicultural nation, particularly amidst the rising trends of intolerance, exclusivism, and latent radicalism among younger generations. University students, as future educators and agents of social transformation, bear a crucial responsibility in cultivating tolerance, inclusivity, and global pluralistic awareness. This study aims to examine the integration of religious moderation values namely balance, tolerance, and non violence within higher education learning processes and its influence on shaping students' global diversity attitudes in the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, followed by thematic analysis to identify emerging patterns of meaning and interpretation. The findings indicate that embedding religious moderation values through curriculum design, reflective pedagogical practices, case based learning, and collaborative projects effectively enhances students' empathy, inclusiveness, and openness toward diversity. Despite contextual challenges such as limited instructional time and variations in lecturer competence, the integration substantially contributes to the formation of globally conscious, tolerant, and peace oriented student profiles within a multicultural academic environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought significant changes to cultural, religious, and social values worldwide, including in Indonesia. This country, known for its rich cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, faces serious challenges, such as rising intolerance and extremism (Rahmawati et al., 2022). With over 300 ethnic groups and six officially recognized religions, Indonesia represents a multicultural society, though this diversity often triggers social tensions (Hutabarat, 2023). The younger generation, especially university students, as future leaders, play a crucial role in fostering social harmony amidst these differences (Huda et al., 2019). Therefore, reinforcing a globally pluralistic attitude that values tolerance and pluralism is essential. One effective approach to achieving this goal is by integrating religious moderation values within University curricula. The phenomenon of radicalism among students indicates that the values of tolerance and diversity have not been fully internalized through the

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educational process.

According to the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), each new academic year witnesses the emergence of campus-based study groups disseminating doctrines of hatred and religious exclusivism across several Indonesian universities (Antara, 2024). Furthermore, a survey conducted revealed that 23% of Indonesian university students are potentially exposed to radical ideologies, based on research involving 1,800 respondents from 25 universities (Malia, 2019). In addition, indicated that some university students and lecturers have been influenced by extremist ideologies through closed religious gatherings and social media platforms (Savitri, 2021).

Based on the data and explanation above, it can be understood that the rise of radical and anti mainstream ideologies among university students represents a serious challenge for higher education institutions. Universities, as intellectual spaces, should serve as arenas for the growth of critical thinking, open dialogue, and respect for diversity not as fertile ground for ideologies that reject pluralism. This phenomenon underscores the urgent need for well-planned and sustainable preventive measures to ensure that radical ideologies do not develop and lead to detrimental consequences in the future. The cultivation of religious moderation values, the strengthening of digital literacy, and the supervision of religious activities on campus are essential strategies for maintaining an academic environment that is healthy, inclusive, and grounded in civility.

However, a gap remains between these aspirations and the current educational practices. Teaching in higher education has not fully integrated religious moderation values. For instance, topics on tolerance and diversity are often presented merely in theoretical terms without relevance to the social context or the real challenges of diversity. Consequently, many students still hold exclusive views or struggle to accept differences around them. For example, during class discussions on religious diversity, some students display narrow or even negative attitudes toward differing beliefs. Yet, outside the campus, they live within a diverse society, making an understanding of diversity a crucial need (Burga & Damopolii, 2022).

At its core, religious moderation emphasizes a balance between personal belief and respect for diversity, teaching individuals not to view their religion or others' beliefs in extreme ways (Aswar et al., 2023; Supriyanto, 2022). The lack of a globally pluralistic attitude is evident in the tendency of some students to socialize only within groups of similar backgrounds and maintain a narrow perspective on issues of diversity (Tavares, 2024; Widodo, 2019). In the academic context, such attitudes can hinder the formation of an inclusive learning environment, which should serve as a platform to broaden students' perspectives and enhance their social skills in managing diversity (Mpu & Adu, 2021; Pedaste et al., 2024; Roldán et al., 2021).

This gap underscores the disparity between the idealism expected from religious moderation values and real-world practices. It highlights the importance of systematic efforts to integrate religious moderation values into university courses so that students not only grasp the concept of diversity theoretically but can also apply it in daily life. With the appropriate educational approach, students are expected to evolve into individuals who not only respect differences but also actively contribute to creating harmony in a multicultural society.

A more practical approach to teaching religious moderation values in the classroom is needed to ensure that students do not merely understand diversity theoretically but can also practice it in daily life (Anas et al., 2022; Siswanto, 2019). Religious moderation, emphasizing a balanced and tolerant approach to practicing religious teachings and respecting differences, is a relevant concept for addressing the challenges of diversity in Indonesia (Mala & Hunaida, 2023; Mawardi, 2024; et al., 2024). Education that integrates religious moderation values is expected to foster an

inclusive understanding, enabling students to adopt open-minded attitudes, respect differences, and respond to social-cultural dynamics in society (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Makin, 2017). Recent studies have shown that moderation-based education can enhance interfaith harmony and reduce radicalization tendencies, ultimately supporting the development of a harmonious and multicultural society.

In this context, universities play a strategic role in shaping students' globally pluralistic attitudes. Universities are responsible for preparing young people who embrace and appreciate diversity as an essential social asset for the future. Through education responsive to global challenges, students are expected to grow into individuals who respect differences, contribute to social harmony, and are prepared to face the complexities of a multicultural global society (Hunduma & Seyoum, 2024; Obiakor, 2021). Social constructivist theory, which posits that individuals construct knowledge through social interaction, emphasizes the role of education in fostering global pluralism. In this context, social constructivism theory Vygotsky, 1978 in Erbil 2020 is relevant to understanding how religious moderation can be integrated through academic interactions in classrooms, where students have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate their views on diversity in an inclusive and open atmosphere (Erbil, 2020). This approach has the potential to reduce cognitive bias and foster attitudes that are more tolerant and responsive to global diversity.

The literature review indicates that religious moderation is a crucial concept in building a harmonious society that values diversity, especially in a multicultural context like Indonesia (Daffa & Anggara, 2023; Imran et al., 2022; Pratiwi & Suniadewi, 2024). Religious moderation, which emphasizes balance, tolerance, and inclusivity in upholding religious values, has become an important approach to addressing social challenges stemming from differences in belief and culture. Higher education institutions play a strategic role in internalizing these values, particularly through curriculum aimed at character development and fostering critical understanding among students (Fariq, 2024; Mahfud & Zahriyah, 2025). Moreover, previous research suggests that integrating religious moderation values into formal education can reduce tendencies toward extremism and raise collective awareness of the importance of social harmony (Khadavi et al., 2025; Mustakim et al., 2021). However, the gap between theory and practice remains a challenge, as many educational institutions have yet to effectively incorporate these moderation values into their curricula. Therefore, this study focuses on examining the influence of integrating religious moderation values in lectures on shaping students' globally pluralistic attitudes, viewed as a critical step toward strengthening social foundations and enhancing the younger generation's capacity to manage diversity.

Another important consideration underlying this study is the selection of the Primary School Teacher Education Program at State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar as the research site. This institution was purposively selected as an information-rich case due to its distinctive institutional, geographical, and socio-cultural characteristics. Located in West Sumatra Province, where the social and cultural life of the community is deeply rooted in the Minangkabau philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar operates within a socio-cultural environment that closely integrates Islamic values with local wisdom. In addition, the university upholds a strong institutional vision of becoming an "Integrative Interconnected University in Knowledge, Rooted in Local Wisdom, and Globally Reputable."

This vision provides a compelling foundation for examining how religious moderation is conceptualized and implemented within higher education. At the same time, students are increasingly exposed to global cultural influences through digital media and the growing mobility of higher education, creating a dynamic interaction between local religious identity and the values of global citizenship. This unique

context makes the Elementary school teacher education Program an ideal setting for investigating how religious moderation values are translated into pedagogical practices and internalized by prospective Islamic primary school teachers.

Furthermore, State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar has demonstrated a strong institutional commitment to mainstreaming religious moderation through curriculum development, the integration of moderation values into various courses, lecturer capacity-building programs through workshops and professional development activities, as well as a wide range of academic and student affairs programs aligned with the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' national agenda on religious moderation. Unlike many Islamic higher education institutions where religious moderation is primarily introduced through extracurricular activities or a limited number of standalone courses, the Elementary School Teacher Education Program has systematically embedded religious moderation values across several compulsory subjects, including Pancasila and Civic Education, Islamic Studies, and teacher professional development courses. This integrated academic environment provides a distinctive opportunity to explore how religious moderation functions not merely as a normative discourse but also as a pedagogical framework that fosters students' global diversity awareness, inclusive attitudes, and professional identity as future Islamic primary school teachers.

The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth approach to uncovering how the integration of religious moderation values in university courses directly influences the formation of students' globally pluralistic attitudes. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on theoretical frameworks or long-term effects within the context of formal education in general, this study emphasizes the specific context of higher education learning. Employing a qualitative approach and case study design, this research not only explores theoretical relationships but also provides empirical insights into the practice of integrating religious moderation values into the curriculum, classroom interaction dynamics, and how these educational experiences are translated by students into their attitudes and behaviors in everyday life. This contributes a fresh perspective by bridging the gap between the idealism of religious moderation values and the realities of their implementation in higher education.

With a systematic approach to religious moderation education, it is hoped that an academic environment will be created that focuses not only on academic achievements but also on building critical, inclusive, and adaptive social character toward the challenges of diversity. The research question focuses on how the integration of religious moderation values in lectures influences the formation of students' globally pluralistic attitudes. This study aims to analyze the extent to which the application of religious moderation values in the educational process can foster inclusive, tolerant, and diversity-responsive attitudes among students, particularly within the context of the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education program.

METHODS

This study was conducted during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year in the Primary School Teacher Education Study Program at State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, West Sumatra, Indonesia. A qualitative approach employing a case study design was adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of how religious moderation values are integrated into the teaching and learning process and how their implementation contributes to fostering students' awareness of global diversity.

The research participants consisted of 16 informants selected through purposive sampling. They comprised ten undergraduate students from the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program who had completed at least their third semester and had successfully undertaken courses related to religious

moderation, including Pancasila Education, Civic Education, Basic Concepts of Civic Education, Civic Education Content for Islamic Primary Schools (MI/SD), Civic Education Teaching Methods for MI/SD, Basic Concepts of Social Studies, Social Studies Content for MI/SD, and Social Studies Teaching Methods for MI/SD. The participants also included four lecturers responsible for teaching Pancasila and Civic Education, Islamic Studies, and Social Studies courses, as well as two academic leaders the Head of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program and the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs who were directly involved in curriculum development and the implementation of religious moderation policies. All participants were purposively selected based on their experience, active involvement in the teaching and learning process, and willingness to participate voluntarily in the study.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The interviews explored participants' experiences regarding the implementation of religious moderation values in classroom learning. Classroom observations focused on lecturer–student interactions, instructional strategies, and learning activities that reflected the integration of religious moderation values (Engkizar et al., 2025; Untung et al., 2022). Documentary analysis included Semester Learning Plans, curriculum documents, course syllabi, teaching modules, students' assignments, institutional policy documents on religious moderation, and reports of academic and student affairs activities related to the promotion of religious moderation.

In this study, the researcher served as the primary research instrument, supported by interview protocols, observation checklists, document analysis guidelines, field notes, and digital audio recordings. Data collection was conducted in three stages: preparation, fieldwork, and data verification. The preparation stage involved preliminary observations, a literature review, and the development of research instruments. The fieldwork stage consisted of conducting interviews, classroom observations, and collecting relevant documents. Subsequently, the verification stage involved data coding, categorization, and interpretation.

The research subjects comprised active students enrolled in the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Programme during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, with a total population of 184 students across six classes. The sample was selected through purposive sampling, based on the following criteria: (1) active students in at least their third semester; (2) having completed courses related to religious moderation, such as Pancasila Education, Social Studies, and Civics Education; and (3) willingness to participate as informants and provide reflective data.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis of academic materials such as Learning Plans, teaching materials, and student assignments. The primary research instrument was the researcher, supported by secondary tools including interview guides, observation sheets, a digital audio recorder and thematic analysis.

The research procedure consisted of three main stages: (1) preparation, including preliminary studies and instrument development; (2) data collection, which involved observation, interviews, and documentation; and (3) validation and ethical review, which ensured data credibility through triangulation of sources, member checking, and expert consultation with academic specialists.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving stages of data reduction, categorisation, and interpretation to identify relevant emerging themes (Xu & Zammit, 2020). The analytical process followed the model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, conducted interactively and concurrently between data collection and conclusion drawing (Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2019; Engkizar et al., 2023). The

validity of findings was ensured through methodological and source triangulation, as well as participant validation. Research ethics were strictly upheld by maintaining participant confidentiality and obtaining informed consent prior to participation. Procedurally, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the integration of religious moderation values is implemented in the teaching process and how it contributes to the development of inclusive, tolerant, and globally minded attitudes among Elementary School Teacher Education students at State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that the integration of religious moderation values within the Elementary School Teacher Education Program at State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar has been effectively implemented through three interconnected dimensions: curriculum design, pedagogical practice, and student character development. Thematic analysis indicates three dominant themes: (1) curriculum-based integration, (2) pedagogical implementation, and (3) student transformation.

In terms of curriculum design, religious moderation values such as tolerance, justice, balance, and anti-extremism are explicitly embedded in the lesson plans of several courses, including Civic Education, Islamic Ethics (*Akhlak Tasawuf*), and Islamic Civilization History. This structured inclusion reflects the institution's commitment to cultivating moderate, inclusive, and globally aware teacher candidates.

Pedagogically, lecturers apply reflective and dialogical approaches by engaging students in discussions on contemporary socio-religious issues and analyzing cases of intolerance from the perspective of *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Learning activities often employ case-based and collaborative learning strategies that promote critical thinking, empathy, and intercultural awareness. Additionally, cultural integration occurs through student-led academic and extracurricular programs such as national seminars, moderate preaching workshops, and interdepartmental collaborations, all of which reinforce the practice of tolerance and civic cooperation on campus.

Qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations indicate that students who actively participate in these dialogical and community-based learning activities demonstrate enhanced awareness of religious diversity and stronger global citizenship dispositions. Documentary evidence also shows that students' learning outcomes consistently align with Islamic, national, and multicultural values that are central to the concept of religious moderation.

The findings of this study reveal that the integration of religious moderation values within the Elementary School Teacher Education Program at State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar has been effectively implemented through three interconnected dimensions: curriculum design, pedagogical implementation, and student transformation.

A thematic analysis of interviews, classroom observations, and document reviews produced three major themes that represent the structure of religious moderation integration in the teaching learning process.

Table 1. Dimension Focus of Integration

Dimension	Focus of Integration	Key Practices	Supporting Evidence
Curricular Integration	Embedding moderation values into the course design	Inclusion of tolerance, justice, balance, and anti-extremism as affective competencies in lesson plans of courses such as Pancasila Education,	Document analysis of lesson plans and syllabus; learning objectives explicitly mention moderation values

		<i>Akhlak Tasawuf, and Islamic Civilization</i>
Pedagogical Implementation	Applying reflective and dialogic learning approaches	Lecturers facilitate open classroom dialogues, use case-based learning on issues of intolerance, and promote collaborative learning emphasizing empathy and critical reflection
Cultural Integration	Strengthening institutional and social engagement	National seminars, moderate da'wah training, and inter-department collaborations that cultivate cooperation, respect, and civic values

The thematic data indicate that religious moderation is not treated as a theoretical subject but as a pedagogical ethos guiding classroom interaction, reflection, and character formation. Students who participated in dialogic discussions and community-based learning activities exhibited higher awareness of religious diversity and demonstrated stronger attitudes of global citizenship.

Supporting documents consistently reflected Islamic and national values aligned with the principles of moderation (*wasatiyyah*), multiculturalism, and civic education. The integration model shows that curricular, pedagogical, and cultural pathways work synergistically to transform students' perspectives from cognitive understanding of moderation toward affective and behavioral internalization.

The findings highlight that integrating the values of religious moderation within Islamic higher education contributes significantly to shaping future educators who are reflective, tolerant, and globally minded. This success can be attributed to a coherent pedagogical alignment among institutional vision, lecturer competence, and student-centered learning practices. The results support the theoretical perspectives of culturally responsive pedagogy and transformative learning, emphasizing that values are not merely transmitted but internalized through reflective engagement and contextual learning.

The integration process observed in the Elementary School Teacher Education Program represents not only a moral education model but also a framework for cultivating intercultural and interfaith understanding in plural societies such as Indonesia. By embedding religious moderation into curricula, teaching strategies, and campus culture, State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar effectively bridges Islamic values with national identity and global citizenship education. This finding echoes earlier research asserting that religious moderation education at Islamic universities fosters openness and inclusivity among students (Hidayatulloh & Saumantri, 2023; Pratama et al., 2025).

Over the past decade, scholarly attention to the integration of religious moderation values in Islamic education has significantly increased, particularly in the context of preparing future teachers capable of fostering tolerance, inclusivity, and global citizenship. The concept of religious moderation (*wasatiyyah*) has been positioned as a counterbalance to exclusivism and radicalism, emphasizing the principles of balance, justice, and respect for diversity. In Indonesia, studies conducted demonstrate that the integration of religious moderation values into the curriculum contributes to shaping students' civic and moral competencies that align with national identity and Islamic ethics.

Several researchers have highlighted the pedagogical dimension of moderation-based education, identified that dialogic, reflective, and contextual learning approaches effectively internalize tolerance values among pre-service teachers.

Similarly, found that incorporating multicultural and interfaith perspectives within course design encourages students to develop empathy and open-mindedness. However, despite these advancements, much of the existing literature remains conceptual rather than empirical, lacking in-depth exploration of how moderation is practiced in classroom realities, especially in Islamic higher education settings.

Internationally, scholars such as in Dissertation emphasized the synergy between culturally responsive pedagogy and moral education, arguing that identity, culture, and belief systems must be embedded within the learning process to nurture inclusive citizens. This resonates with the Indonesian educational vision that seeks to combine religious values with civic education to produce learners who are both devout and democratic. Nonetheless, research on the implementation of these pedagogical principles within the context of Islamic teacher education programs remains limited.

Therefore, this study addresses the empirical and methodological gaps by examining how religious moderation values are operationalized in the Elementary School Teacher Education program of State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. It contributes to the literature by providing an evidence-based model of integration that links curricular design, instructional practice, and student character formation. By doing so, the study extends previous discussions from a theoretical domain to a practical, context-driven understanding of moderation-oriented education within higher Islamic institutions.

Moreover, this study identifies several enabling factors: strong institutional commitment to moderation as a core value, lecturers serving as role models for dialogical and moderate behavior, value-based curriculum design, and a supportive campus environment promoting social harmony. However, some barriers persist, including the limited availability of moderation-focused teaching materials, misconceptions among new students about moderation, and assessment systems that remain predominantly cognitive in nature. These constraints suggest the need to strengthen affective and reflective dimensions of learning through the development of dedicated moderation-based teaching modules.

Ultimately, this study underscores the pivotal role of Islamic higher education in developing educators capable of nurturing peace, harmony, and mutual respect in diverse societies. The Elementary School Teacher Education model at State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar demonstrates how the internalization of moderation values can serve as a transformative pedagogical framework for promoting both religious and civic virtues in teacher education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of religious moderation values in the Elementary School Teacher Education Program at State Islamic University Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar has proven effective in cultivating inclusive, tolerant, and globally conscious teacher candidates. The process implemented systematically through curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, and academic culture has fostered civic virtues aligned with both Islamic and national educational goals. The findings contribute to the scientific discourse on value-based and multicultural education by presenting an empirical model for embedding moderation principles into higher education pedagogy. Future research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of this integration on the professional practices of graduates and their role in promoting peace-oriented education in schools and communities.

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