



The Role of Religious Moderation Values in Shaping Student Tolerance Attitudes within Campus Environments

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ABSTRACT

Background: As a multicultural nation, Indonesia possesses a rich diversity of religions, ethnic groups, and cultures that necessitates strong tolerance in social interactions, particularly in higher education environments where polarization risks remain present. **Objective:** This study aims to examine the urgency of religious moderation values in influencing students' tolerance attitudes within campus and community life. **Method:** The research employed a qualitative approach based on a comprehensive literature review, synthesizing empirical and theoretical insights from peer-reviewed journals, academic books, and policy documents published on religious moderation. **Result:** The findings indicate that internalizing core religious moderation values, specifically tolerance, balance, and justice exerts a strong positive influence on mutual respect among students, effectively mitigating exclusivity and fostering a harmonious campus atmosphere. **Conclusion:** Embedding religious moderation through structured education and social activities serves as an urgent and pivotal strategy for developing enduring student tolerance. **Originality/Value:** This study provides theoretical and conceptual novelty in the field of higher education sociology and character education by synthesizing scholarly literature on the internalization mechanisms of core religious moderation values specifically tolerance, balance, and justice in shaping mutual respect and mitigating student exclusivity regarding the creation of inclusive academic spaces within the context of multicultural campus environments, which has received limited integrated synthesis bridging policy documents and empirical scholarship. These findings map existing conceptual gaps and serve as a strategic reference, contributing to the formulation of campus student governance policies, the design of structured tolerance educational curricula, and the development of sustainable cross religious interaction programs in higher education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization and information disruption, managing diversity in multicultural societies has become a global challenge confronting nation worldwide. The rapid advancement of digital communication technologies has not only expanded spaces for intergroup interaction but has also heightened the risks of social polarization and the dissemination of intolerant narratives that threaten social cohesion (Nurwahida et al., 2025; Yasa & Mahmudin, 2025). Within this global landscape, Indonesia stands out as one of the largest multicultural nations, characterized by an exceptionally high degree of diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup distinc-

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tions (Hutabarat, 2023). This diversity represents sociological capital, rich cultural heritage, and a fundamental national identity that must be prudently nurtured, safeguarded, and managed to continually serve as a unifying bond amid the dynamics of changing times.

Ideally, social life within a pluralistic reality should function harmoniously, peacefully, justly, and inclusively. Communication and interaction among elements of society with diverse faith backgrounds should be grounded in an awareness of equal rights, mutual respect, and profound social empathy (Huda & Haryanto, 2023). Achieving this ideal social order requires the presence of a moderate religious understanding, a religious conception capable of bridging individual faith commitments with civic responsibility within a pluralistic public sphere (Adnan et al., 2025). The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia explicitly formulates that successful internalization of religious moderation is reflected in four core indicators: a firm national commitment, high tolerance, non violence (anti violence), and an accommodative stance toward local culture and traditions (Kemenag, 2019). These four indicators serve as ethical cornerstones and strategic benchmarks in cultivating a harmonious social ecosystem resilient against the threats of radicalism.

However, empirical realities on the ground frequently demonstrate a significant gap from these envisioned ideals. Multicultural societies fundamentally harbor vulnerabilities to horizontal conflict if they are not fortified by deeply rooted tolerance (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Under certain conditions, divergent perspectives and contested religious interpretations are prone to escalate into social friction when religious and educational institutions fail to act as constructive dialogical bridges (Rohmah, 2024). This issue frequently surfaces among social groups that maintain rigid, narrow religious perspectives and lack a comprehensive understanding of social diversity (Aziz, 2020). Higher education environments are by no means immune to these phenomena of intolerance and exclusivism. The academic sphere of a university campus, which should ideally serve as an intellectual incubator for critical, open, and inclusive thought, is vulnerable to extremist ideologies when interpersonal interactions are driven by primordial biases. Without a balanced, just, and non extremist religious worldview and behavior (Ali, 2020), disparate religious interpretations among university students risk triggering heightened social polarization across campus settings.

Extensive scholarly attention has previously been devoted to religious moderation and tolerance. The vast majority of existing literature focuses on religious moderation from normative theological angles, institutional policy mappings by governmental bodies, or macro level strategies for preventing radicalism among the general public (Halim & Faisal, 2024; Prasetyo et al., 2025; Yuliawati & Asri, 2024). Furthermore, previous research has consistently underscored the vital role of educational institutions in socializing the four indicators of religious moderation to maintain national stability (Hilal, 2023; Mukhibat et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2023). These studies collectively demonstrate a positive correlation between inclusive religious understanding and the reduction of radical ideologies within university campuses (Zakiyah et al., 2023).

Despite the abundance of literature on religious moderation, an important academic research gap remains. Most prior studies have predominantly addressed religious moderation as theoretical discourse, cognitive awareness, or top-down regulatory frameworks. In depth and systematic investigations into how religious moderation values are internalized by students, and how these values tangibly reshape their affective dispositions and daily tolerant behaviors within campus social interactions, remain scarce. Moreover, an evident cognitive behavioral gap exists, wherein students with conceptual comprehension do not necessarily manifest tolerant behaviors when confronted with real world social conflicts.

To bridge existing gaps, this study offers theoretical contributions to the sociology of religion and practical frameworks for higher education stakeholders to design pro-inclusive curricula and policies against intolerance. Grounded in a systematic review of peer-reviewed literature and policy documents, the study examines how internalizing religious moderation values shapes student tolerance attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, it aims to: (1) map students' understanding of religious moderation values, (2) identify patterns and manifestations of campus tolerance behaviors, and (3) analyze the precise mechanisms through which moderation values foster tolerant character development in higher education environments.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method to examine the influence of religious moderation values on students' tolerance attitudes in campus life. The qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on gaining an in depth understanding of the concepts, core values, and implementation of religious moderation within student social interactions across higher education environments.

2.2 Research Object

The object of this research encompasses religious moderation values and student tolerance attitudes in campus life. Specifically, this study examines students’ comprehension of religious moderation values, the influence of internalizing these values on tolerance attitudes, the role of religious moderation in fostering an inclusive and harmonious campus environment, and strategic pathways to strengthen religious moderation through educational initiatives and social activities among university students.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted by retrieving relevant literature from diverse scholarly sources, including peer reviewed journals, academic books, empirical research articles, and policy documents addressing religious moderation, tolerance, and campus student life. The literature search was executed using primary keywords such as "religious moderation", "student tolerance", "inclusive campus", and "student multicultural life".

2.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques through systematic stages: data reduction, data classification, contextual interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis was performed by synthesizing and comparing empirical findings across previous studies to establish a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the relationship between religious moderation and student tolerance attitudes within higher education settings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

3.1.1. Concept and Foundations of Religious Moderation

Religious moderation (wasathiyyah) refers to the middle path in religious life, avoiding both right-wing extremism (religious radicalism) and left-wing extremism (unbounded liberalism). Etymologically, the Arabic term wasath denotes "middle" or "balanced," as articulated in Surah Al Baqarah verse 143, which describes the Muslim community as a "justly balanced nation" (ummatan wasathan). This concept was adapted into the Indonesian national context through policies of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, defining religious moderation as a perspective, attitude, and religious practice in shared civic life that manifests the essence of religious teachings within the framework of the unitarian state based on Pancasila (Kemenag, 2019).

The theological foundation of religious moderation in Islam derives from the doctrine of ausat, emphasizing the principles of balance (tawazun), justice ('adalah), and moderation (tawassuth). These principles represent integral components of religious teachings rather than mere social constructs. Consequently, adopting a moderate posture manifests a proper and comprehensive understanding of religion rather than a compromise or weakening of faith (Rouf, 2020). In Indonesia, religious moderation holds profound relevance because society has historically lived alongside diversity. Local traditions that accommodate religious plurality, such as slametan, gotong royong (mutual cooperation), and musyawarah mufakat (deliberation for consensus), constitute social capital that reinforces moderate religious practices. Thus, religious moderation in Indonesia remains inseparable from local cultural values and the spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia outlines four primary indicators to assess the internalization of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, non violence, and accommodation of local culture. Beyond evaluating implementation success, these indicators identify social vulnerabilities so timely interventions can prevent radicalization (Kemenag, 2019).

Table 1. Indicators of Religious Moderation According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs RI (2019)

No.	Indicator	Description
1	National Commitment	Acceptance of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as the national consensus
2	Tolerance	Respecting differences in beliefs, cultures, and perspectives of others without imposing ones will
3	Non-Violence	Rejecting all forms of physical and verbal violence committed in the name of religion
4	Accommodative toward Local Culture	Appreciating and accommodating local traditions and wisdom provided they do not contradict fundamental religious principles

3.1.2. Manifestations of Religious Moderation in Campus Environments

Religious moderation in campus settings manifests through academic and non-academic activities designed to cultivate tolerance and mutual respect for diversity. Academically, religious moderation values are embedded in religious education courses, character education, and learning activities that stimulate critical thinking and openness to differences. This instructional process moves beyond normative religious instruction to highlight peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society.

Non academically, religious moderation takes shape through student organization initiatives, national seminars, interfaith dialogues, community service programs, and cross-cultural social activities. These platforms serve as encounter spaces that facilitate direct interactions among students from diverse religious, cultural, and ideological backgrounds.

Furthermore, several higher education institutions have established specialized units such as the Religious Moderation House (Rumah Moderasi Beragama) to educate and reinforce moderation values campus wide. These initiatives reflect institutional commitment to cultivating an academic climate that respects diversity and sustains an inclusive, harmonious campus life.

3.1.3. Student Understanding of Religious Moderation

Student comprehension of religious moderation varies across individual backgrounds, shaped by prior religious education, family socialization, interfaith contact, and campus activity participation. Empirical findings show that while some students lack familiarity with the formal term "religious moderation," they substantively grasp core principles such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and non violence. Hence, substantive understanding does not always depend on familiarity with technical terminology (Ali, 2020; Ardiansyah et al., 2024).

The majority of university students in Indonesia express positive views toward interfaith tolerance and peaceful coexistence. However, a persistent gap remains between stated attitudes and actual behavior, particularly during interpersonal conflicts, competing interests, or peer pressure. Cognitive comprehension alone proves insufficient to maintain consistent moderate behavior, necessitating deeper internalization through experiential encounters, structured dialogue, reflection, and sustained social engagement (Shofiyuddin et al., 2024).

Conversely, students affiliated with exclusive religious organizations frequently adopt narrower perspectives on religious moderation. Moderation is often misconstrued as doctrinal compromise that dilutes religious purity or weakens faith identity. In reality, religious moderation does not compromise religious convictions; rather, it promotes a just, balanced posture that honors diversity. This divergence highlights the necessity of dialogical, inclusive, and participatory educational strategies within higher education institutions (Nasrudin et al., 2024a).

Table 2. Factors Influencing Student Understanding of Religious Moderation

No.	Factor		Influence on Moderation Understanding
1	Family Socialization	Religious	Establishes foundational values early; moderate households tend to produce tolerant students
2	Higher Curriculum	Education	Integrating moderation values into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) enhances cognitive understanding
3	Interfaith Experiences		Direct contact with individuals of different faiths strengthens empathy and tolerance
4	Social Media Influence		Expands or restricts perspectives depending on critical digital literacy levels
5	Religious Affiliation	Organization	Moderate organizations foster inclusivity; exclusive organizations risk narrowing perspectives

Source: Adapted from Purwanto & Fauzi (2019), Shofiyuddin et al. (2024), and Nasrudin et al. (2024a)

3.1.4. The Influence of Religious Moderation on Tolerance Attitudes

Internalizing religious moderation values within campus life contributes positively to shaping student tolerance attitudes. Successful internalization fosters a conducive, harmonious academic environment resilient against radicalism and intolerance. Students with robust religious moderation comprehension manage differences constructively, reject intergroup prejudice, and participate actively in cross cultural and interfaith activities. Empirical studies confirm a significant positive correlation between religious moderation understanding and student tolerance levels (Ashoumi et al., 2023). In addition, experiential learning programs demonstrate greater efficacy in cultivating tolerant behavior than conventional lecture based instructional methods (Shofiyuddin et al., 2024).

In daily campus life, religious moderation translates into concrete behaviors, such as respecting peers during worship, collaborating in academic groups regardless of religious background, maintaining respectful communication, and participating in student organizations. Campus climates rooted in mutual respect and openness foster harmony and broaden perspectives on diversity. Non-Muslim students report feeling respected and welcomed by peers of different faiths in such environments (Mardani et al., 2023). Moderation based education thus instills compassion, positive thinking, solid religious commitment, and interfaith solidarity.

Moreover, the influence of religious moderation extends beyond interfaith tolerance to embrace broader social diversity, including differences in opinion, ethnic origin, and organizational affiliation. The resulting tolerant mindset encourages civic engagement, social harmony, and mutual cooperation across pluralistic communities (Hanif, 2025). Higher education institutions thus function not merely as centers of knowledge production, but as strategic incubators for tolerant, inclusive individuals prepared to navigate a diverse society.

Table 3. Synthesis of Literature Findings on Religious Moderation and Student Tolerance

Researcher (Year)	Study Focus	Main Findings	Context
Purwanto and Fauzi (2019)	Internalization of moderation values through PAI in general universities	Students taking moderation integrated PAI show higher comprehension, yet a gap between cognitive grasp and actual behavior persists	Indonesian General Universities
Herlinawati (2020)	Integration of moderation in PAI in general universities	Moderation integration in PAI effectively develops open and critical attitudes; lecturer competence remains the primary challenge	Indonesian General Universities
Ali (2020)	Measurement of Islamic moderation among state university students	Moderation levels among state university students in Kalimantan are moderate to high; digital environments influence religious outlooks	State Universities in Kalimantan
Hefni (2020)	Moderation in Islamic higher education within digital spaces	Digital counter narrative strategies via the Religious Moderation House effectively disseminate moderate values across student social media	State Islamic Higher Education (PTKIN)
Ashoumi et al. (2023)	Internalization of moderation values and tolerance attitudes	Significant positive correlation between religious moderation comprehension scores and student tolerance scores	State Islamic Higher Education (PTKIN)
Shofiyuddin et al. (2024)	Systematic review of moderation in higher education	Experiential learning programs outperform conventional lectures in driving behavioral tolerance changes	Various Indonesian Higher Education Institutions
Mardani et al. (2023)	Moderation education as rahmatan lil 'alamin	Moderation education fosters compassion, constructive thinking, and brotherhood, reducing campus social friction	Islamic Education in Indonesia
Hanif (2025)	Religious moderation and civic patriotism (hubbul wathan) in higher education	Students with deep moderation comprehension exhibit higher national commitment and greater readiness as peace ambassadors	Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia

Source: Synthesized from various literature sources (2019 to 2025)

Table 4. Cross Study Finding Patterns

No.	Finding Pattern	Supporting Studies	Practical Implication
1	Religious moderation comprehension correlates positively with student tolerance attitudes	Ashoumi et al. (2023); Purwanto & Fauzi (2019); Shofiyuddin et al. (2024)	Enhancing moderation education quality directly impacts student tolerance
2	Experiential approaches prove more effective than normative lectures in modifying tolerant behavior	Herlinawati (2020); Mardani et al. (2023); Shofiyuddin et al. (2024)	Program design must prioritize direct engagement over mere knowledge transfer
3	A consistent gap exists between cognitive comprehension and behavioral internalization of tolerance	Ali (2020); Nasrudin et al. (2024a); Purwanto and Fauzi (2019)	Targeted strategies are needed to bridge knowledge, attitudes, and real world behavior

4	Digital environments represent critical spaces for shaping or undermining student moderation values	Ali (2020); Hefni (2020); Karo Karo & Br Ginting (2021)	Moderation initiatives must incorporate critical digital literacy and proactive content creation
5	Student organization affiliation directs the trajectory of moderation value internalization	Nasrudin et al. (2024a); Shofiyuddin et al. (2024)	Campus administrators must support inclusive organizations and regulate exclusionary dynamics

Source: Synthesized from various literature sources (2019 to 2025)

3.1.5. The Role of Religious Moderation in Fostering an Inclusive Campus

Scholarly evidence indicates that religious moderation plays a central role in cultivating safe, tolerant, and inclusive higher education institutions across policy, curricular, and cultural dimensions. In Islamic higher education environments, religious moderation fosters mutual understanding among students of diverse faiths, curbs sectarian tendencies, instills commendable ethical values, and supports national dignity (Sholeh, 2023). Beyond preventing radicalism, moderation reinforces civic unity, social cohesion, and equal opportunities for all students. Characterized by balance, non extremism, and pluralistic Muslim non-Muslim engagement, moderation prevents horizontal friction while instilling compassion, constructive thinking, and interfaith solidarity. Nationally, it deepens civic patriotism (hubbul wathan) across the academic community.

The link between religious moderation and inclusive campuses emerges through two primary scholarship streams. International literature underscores inclusive institutional policies and pedagogical practices: student centered curricula, differentiated instruction, flexible assessments, and universal physical, social, and digital accessibility for marginalized groups and individuals with disabilities. These frameworks emphasize that inclusion encompasses safety, respect for diverse identities (religion, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status), and a genuine sense of belonging. Cultivating inclusive environments requires leadership commitment to treat diversity as a pedagogical asset, provide interfaith forums, offer faculty development, and establish protective policies for minority groups.

Within Indonesian and broader Islamic contexts, religious moderation provides the normative and ethical foundation for these inclusive practices. Theological inquiries emphasize contextual textual interpretation, avoidance of extremism (tatharruf), and robust interfaith engagement to prevent conflict. Islamic higher education institutions serve as peace laboratories by embedding moderation across institutional policies, curricula, and digital media through counter narrative initiatives, Religious Moderation Houses, research dissemination, and community outreach. Consequently, moderation values shape how faculty teach, how students engage in interfaith dialogue, how anti discrimination policies operate, and how vulnerable student populations remain protected from exclusion. In this manner, religious moderation acts as an ethical anchor reinforcing inclusive policies, while global inclusion frameworks provide operational tools to institutionalize these values in daily campus life.

3.1.6. Strategies for Strengthening Religious Moderation

Education serves as a primary vehicle for internalizing religious moderation values among university students. Higher education institutions function not only for knowledge transmission but also for character formation and social integration. Curricula centered on ethical character development are essential for countering intolerance and radicalism. Strengthening religious moderation must therefore be woven into curricula, instructional delivery, and campus academic culture.

Five strategic pathways can be implemented to institutionalize religious moderation in higher education (Sutarto, 2022):

Curricular Insertion: Embedding core moderation values (tolerance, civic commitment, non violence, and inclusivity) across relevant coursework, including Islamic Religious Education, Pancasila Education, and Civic Education. This integration enables students to appreciate religious, cultural, and ideological diversity as an essential civic reality.

Instructional Learning Models: Integrating moderation values through active learning models that nurture critical thinking, such as discovery learning, inquiry learning, project-based learning, problem based learning, and cooperative learning. Discovery and inquiry methods train students to analyze and interpret complex social issues from multiple perspectives. Project based learning encourages collaborative deliberation and shared responsibility. Problem based learning facilitates critical examination of real-world challenges like discrimination and social conflict. Cooperative learning fosters mutual assistance and respectful dialogue, embedding moderation into classroom interactions rather than relying solely on lectures.

Student Activity Integration: Embedding moderation values into student organizations, campus orientations, student activity units (UKM), committees, and social initiatives. Engaging in diverse collaborative environments cultivates openness, cross cultural communication, and non exclusivist behaviors.

Field Experience and Community Engagement Programs: Leveraging Field Experience Programs (PPL) and Student Community Engagement (KKN) to expose students to societal diversity firsthand. Living and working within pluralistic communities builds social empathy, adaptability, and respect for local traditions.

Flagship Institutional Programs: Developing signature initiatives across university, faculty, and departmental levels, such as national seminars, interfaith dialogues, leadership training, and anti intolerance campaigns. Interfaith dialogues are particularly effective for fostering mutual understanding and respect across faith boundaries (Nasrudin et al., 2024a). Sustained institutional policies and campus cultural norms ensure these efforts extend beyond the classroom into daily university life.

3.2. Discussion

Based on the findings presented in Section 3.1, this section provides an interpretative analysis addressing the primary research questions: how religious moderation values influence student tolerance attitudes, the mechanisms through which this influence operates, and the conditioning factors that govern its efficacy. The analysis synthesizes findings across studies, identifying patterns of convergence and divergence while interpreting their practical implications within Indonesian higher education.

3.2.1. Mechanisms of Influence: The Three Pathway Cognitive Affective Behavioral Framework

A foundational finding of this study is that the influence of religious moderation values on student tolerance attitudes is neither direct nor automatic. Rather, it operates across three interacting pathways, conceptualized here as the three-pathway cognitive affective behavioral framework. Synthesized from 28 analyzed sources, this model aligns with Banduras social learning theory, which underscores the central role of observation, direct experience, and reinforcement in shaping human attitudes and behavior (Shofiyuddin et al., 2024).

Table 5. The Three Pathway Framework of Religious Moderation Influence on Student Tolerance Attitudes

Pathway	Operating Mechanism	Tolerance Behavioral Manifestation	Sources
Cognitive	Comprehension of moderation reshapes perceptions of out groups; diminishes stereotypes and negative prejudices through cognitive schema restructuring	Willingness to listen to diverse perspectives; suspension of judgment; ability to adopt alternative viewpoints	Nasrudin et al. (2024a); Purwanto & Fauzi (2019)
Affective	Internalization of rahmah (compassion) and empathy fosters comfort with diversity and strengthens shared human brotherhood	Respecting peers during worship; ease with differing rituals; demonstrating genuine care for friends of different faiths	Khairani (2024); Mardani et al. (2023)
Behavioral	Direct interfaith and intercultural contact through campus programs transforms social behavior patterns sustainably	Collaborating in interfaith academic teams; participating in cross religious activities; mediating social conflicts	Ashoumi et al. (2023); Shofiyuddin et al. (2024)

Source: Synthesized from various literature sources (2019 to 2025)

Cognitive Pathway. Comprehending religious moderation values fundamentally reshapes how students perceive and interpret diversity. When students recognize that moderation is an intrinsic dimension of religious doctrine rather than a faith compromising concession, religious differences are no longer viewed as threats, but as realities warranting respect. Purwanto & Fauzi (2019) demonstrated that students enrolled in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) courses integrated with moderation principles exhibited significant reductions in prejudice toward out group religious communities. Nevertheless, cognitive shifts serve as necessary but insufficient conditions: intellectual grasp absent deep experiential internalization does not automatically transform behavior (Nasrudin et al., 2024a).

Affective Pathway. Moderation values emphasizing compassion (rahmah), empathy, and universal human fraternity establish the emotional foundation of tolerance. Mardani et al. (2023) observed that moderation-based education centering on compassion successfully fostered more empathetic and affectively open student dispositions. This finding is reinforced by Khairani (2024), who conceptualized a "curriculum of love" that positions empathy and

fraternity as the core of the learning experience rather than supplementary outcomes. Consequently, moderation initiatives that neglect affective dimensions while focusing solely on cognitive instruction yield superficial tolerance vulnerable to situational stressors.

Behavioral Pathway. Observable changes in tolerant behavior represent the most concrete manifestation of religious moderation and depend heavily on the quality of direct experiences provided by the institution. [Shofiyuddin et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Ashoumi et al. \(2023\)](#) consistently found that tolerant behavioral transformation occurs most effectively through active immersion in cross cultural and interfaith encounters rather than passive knowledge acquisition. This aligns with experiential learning theory, which posits that sustained attitudinal change requires cyclical engagement through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

These three pathways do not function in isolation; they reinforce one another. Cognitive awareness lacking affective resonance produces intellectualized yet insincere tolerance. Affective empathy without behavioral outlets yields passive sentiment devoid of action. Conversely, comprehensive interventions engaging all three dimensions simultaneously, such as Religious Moderation Houses integrating education, community building, and direct engagement, generate the most significant and sustainable outcomes ([Hefni, 2020](#)).

3.2.2. Factors Conditioning the Efficacy of Moderation Values

The second key finding indicates that religious moderations impact on tolerance does not occur in a vacuum; it is mediated by five primary institutional and environmental factors that either reinforce or attenuate its outcomes. Understanding these conditioning factors is crucial for designing targeted, context sensitive interventions.

Table 6. Reinforcing and Attenuating Factors Influencing Religious Moderation Outcomes on Student Tolerance

Factor	Reinforcing Conditions	Attenuating Conditions
Curriculum and Pedagogy	Contextually integrated moderation coursework; active models such as PBL, cooperative learning, and discovery learning	Formalistic and ritualistic instruction; unidirectional lecture formats; absence of real world diversity contextualization
Student Organizations	Moderate organizations facilitating interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural collaboration	Exclusive single identity organizations reinforcing in group favoritism and resisting open dialogue
Digital Environment	Critical digital literacy; proactive moderation content disseminated by campus Religious Moderation Houses	Social media echo chambers; uncritical exposure to extremist rhetoric without verification skills
Field Experiences	Community service (KKN) in diverse settings; regional student exchange initiatives; interfaith social engagement	Scarcity of direct engagement with diverse groups; social segregation within campus dormitories and classrooms
Institutional Policy	Clear anti discrimination policies; active Religious Moderation Houses; proactive institutional leadership	Absence of diversity regulations; inaction regarding discriminatory behaviors; contradiction between institutional rhetoric and practice

Source: Synthesized from various literature sources (2019 to 2025)

Curriculum and Pedagogy. Evidence from [Herlinawati \(2020\)](#) and [Purwanto & Fauzi \(2019\)](#) confirms that curricula explicitly integrating moderation values contextually outperform purely formalistic approaches. Active learning models stimulate constructive student engagement across differences, providing essential conditions for behavioral tolerance ([Sutarto, 2022](#)). Furthermore, students in religious higher education institutions frequently display higher baseline moderation and tolerance scores than their counterparts in non religious institutions ([Mualim and Naufal, 2025](#)). This variance stems from explicit theological curricula and prior religious educational socialization. However, findings indicate that while religious education improves moderation, the rate of increase can be modest among students with strong primary religious schooling who already grasp core tenets like national loyalty, non violence, and cultural accommodation theoretically. In addition, faculty competence and personal commitment directly shape internalization; instructors lacking conviction tend to deliver material mechanically, producing negligible developmental impact.

Student Organizations. [Shofiyuddin et al. \(2024\)](#) revealed that students participating in cross cultural and interfaith organizations consistently scored higher on tolerance metrics than peers restricted to mono religious or mono ethnic groups. Moderate student groups function as social laboratories where inclusive principles are enacted. In contrast, [Nasrudin et al. \(2024a\)](#) observed that insular organizations deepen in group favoritism and reject dialogue, thereby undermining ongoing institutional moderation efforts.

Digital Environment. Research by Ali (2020) and Hefni (2020) demonstrates that digital spaces fundamentally reshape student religious socialization. Algorithmic echo chambers risk reinforcing ideological biases and facilitating online radicalization. Karo & Br Ginting (2021) observed that social media platforms become arenas for intergroup tension when students lack critical digital literacy. Conversely, universities that proactively leverage digital spaces by producing moderation content and equipping students as digital peace ambassadors transform online spheres into productive environments for moderation advocacy.

Field Experiences. Siregar (2025) established that students participating in Community Engagement Programs (KKN) within multi ethnic and multi religious environments developed enhanced competencies as community peace facilitators. Direct fieldwork functions as a vital mediating bridge between classroom theory and real-world behavioral application. Meaningful inclusion requires authentic experiential exposure to diverse populations rather than abstract policy statements (Dwyer et al., 2023).

Institutional Policy. Hanif (2025) reported that proactive administrative leadership, demonstrated through formal policy frameworks and executive role modeling, establishes a campus climate conducive to tolerance. A systematic review by Filippou et al. (2025) confirmed that sustainable inclusion demands systemic organizational culture shifts rather than isolated short-term interventions. Discrepancies between institutional diversity rhetoric and actual administrative or faculty conduct erode student trust, fostering cynicism toward moderation initiatives.

3.2.3. The Cognitive Behavioral Gap and Its Pedagogical Implications

A notable finding across the reviewed literature is the persistent cognitive behavioral gap in student tolerance. Four independent investigations (Ali, 2020) identified a common pattern: students frequently endorse moderation principles conceptually, yet exhibit intolerant behaviors when facing real world social conflicts or peer pressure. This discrepancy reflects an incomplete internalization process that fails to translate theoretical knowledge into stable behavioral dispositions.

Two primary mechanisms explain this divide. First, cognitive understanding of moderation often remains abstract and detached from students lived realities. When real world scenarios demand tolerance, such as navigating acute theological disagreements or resisting exclusivist social cliques, abstract knowledge proves insufficient to steer behavioral choices (Nasrudin et al., 2024a). Second, peer conformity pressures and in group favoritism often override principles learned in academic settings. Shofiyuddin et al. (2024) highlighted that students active in exclusivist circles showed heightened tendencies toward intolerant conduct despite demonstrating sound conceptual comprehension.

The pedagogical implications are straightforward: religious moderation initiatives must be deliberately structured to bridge this cognitive behavioral divide rather than merely delivering theoretical content. Effective pedagogical strategies include reflective learning connecting moderation concepts to lived experiences, scenario-based simulations and role playing for conflict resolution, structured cross religious mentorship programs, and the cultivation of campus social norms that celebrate tolerance as an institutional virtue.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

The findings of this literature review offer meaningful insights and valuable comparisons with prior scholarly work. Theoretically, this study reinforces the necessity of internalizing religious moderation values within higher education. Unlike earlier studies that frequently examined religious moderation from a purely theological viewpoint, the literature synthesized here demonstrates a sociological shift where contemporary student understanding is heavily shaped by digital culture. Practically, this reality requires students to become more discerning when consuming religious narratives while serving as a reflective foundation for cultivating inclusive and tolerant behaviors.

From a managerial standpoint, these findings provide essential guidance for campus administrators in crafting institutional policies. The study confirms that strategies for strengthening religious moderation must move beyond rigid, top-down mandates to embrace bottom-up approaches, including curriculum integration and the structural operationalization of moderation values. Methodologically, this article provides a distinct benchmark for related research. While earlier scholarship is predominantly dominated by quantitative field surveys, this study demonstrates that a literature review using secondary data, even within a focused corpus of sources, effectively maps crucial conceptual threads and academic gaps prior to embarking on large scale empirical investigations.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes to the literature on religious moderation in higher education, particularly regarding how moderation values shape student tolerance attitudes. It enriches academic discourse on the interplay among religious moderation comprehension, tolerant attitudes, and student social dynamics on campus. Furthermore, it delivers practical contributions for universities designing character development programs. Consequently, this study serves as a reference for academic administrators, faculty members, and student organizations seeking to develop initiatives that foster safe, inclusive campus environments free from intolerance.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitation

Several limitations in this study should be noted. First, this research relies on a qualitative literature review method to examine the influence of religious moderation values on student tolerance, depending entirely on secondary sources such as peer reviewed journals, books, and policy documents. Due to field constraints and limited primary access, data collection did not incorporate direct interviews or surveys with students and university stakeholders. Consequently, first hand psychological and sociological dynamics within the academic community could not be captured directly. Second, the corpus of secondary literature analyzed was relatively focused. While the selected literature adequately answers the research questions and supports valid conclusions, the scope of data sources may constrain broader topical generalizability.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Building upon these limitations, several avenues for future research are suggested:

Future researchers are encouraged to transition from desk-based reviews to empirical field studies to gather primary data. Conducting on site investigations through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews with students, faculty, and administrators will provide a more grounded, up to date perspective on religious moderation practices.

Scholars continuing with literature-based approaches should expand search timeframes and query broader international indexing databases to diversify theoretical frameworks. Additionally, comparative studies analyzing religious moderation policies across diverse higher education institutions would help evaluate the comparative efficacy of distinct institutional models.

6. CONCLUSION

Religious moderation (*wasathiyah*), grounded in the foundational principles of balance (*tawazun*), justice (*'adalah*), and moderation (*tawassuth*), contributes significantly to shaping student tolerance attitudes. Rooted in Islamic teachings and adapted to the Indonesian civic landscape, religious moderation integrates four primary pillars: national commitment, tolerance, non violence, and accommodation toward local culture. Within higher education, these values are internalized through academic and non-academic channels, ranging from Islamic Religious Education curricula and student organizations to interfaith forums and campus based Religious Moderation Houses. The influence of religious moderation operates through three mutually reinforcing pathways: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitively, moderation reframes perceived differences from potential threats into valuable social assets. Affectively, values of compassion (*rahmah*) and empathy create an emotional foundation for sincere appreciation of diversity. Behaviorally, direct immersion in cross cultural and interfaith activities cultivates enduring collaborative habits, from respecting others during worship to mediating social friction. When these three pathways function in synergy, student tolerance matures into a resilient personal disposition capable of withstanding external situational pressures.

Nevertheless, this review highlights a notable paradox: a persistent cognitive behavioral gap in student tolerance. Conceptual mastery of moderation does not automatically yield tolerant behavior during real world conflicts or group pressure. Two primary mechanisms account for this divide: abstract, theoretical instruction detached from lived realities, and strong conformity pressures from insular student groups that override classroom learning. This challenge is further intensified by digital environments prone to echo chambers and online radicalization, where algorithms reinforce existing biases. These dynamics demonstrate that moderation education cannot remain a passive knowledge transfer. It must be intentionally designed to bridge understanding and action through reflective

learning, realistic conflict simulations, sustained interfaith mentorship, and campus social norms that celebrate diversity.

The efficacy of religious moderation ultimately relies on the coordinated synergy of five key factors. Contextual curricula utilizing active learning models such as problem-based learning, cooperative learning, and discovery learning prove far more effective than traditional lectures in cultivating tolerant behavior. Open, moderate student organizations act as social laboratories for practicing moderation, while community engagement programs (KKN) in diverse community's bridge academic concepts with real world application. In digital spheres, critical media literacy shields students from extremist rhetoric while empowering institutions to circulate positive counter narratives. Underpinning all these efforts is coherent institutional policy, spanning enforceable anti discrimination regulations, operational Religious Moderation Houses, and leadership that treats diversity as an educational asset. When these components align sustainably, religious moderation becomes an active institutional culture lived by the entire university community, producing graduates who are intellectually proficient, civically committed, empathetic, and prepared to serve as ambassadors of peace in a pluralistic society.

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Author Contribution Statement

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The authors declare that Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), specifically ChatGPT [(<https://chat.openai.com/>)], was used in a limited capacity during the drafting and revision process of this study. GenAI was applied solely to assist in refining sentence structures, improving spelling and grammar, and suggesting paraphrasing options. GenAI was not used to replace critical academic thinking or the authors scholarly responsibilities. All AI generated suggestions were carefully reviewed, verified, and adapted by the authors to ensure alignment with the research objectives, thematic context, and original work. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the [JISMB GenAI Tool Usage Policy](#), with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work.

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