



The Internalization of Religious Moderation Values in Aqidah and Akhlaq Courses at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FTIK) of IAIN Kerinci

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Abstract

The diversity of Indonesian society is reflected in the variety of ethnicities, religions, races, and social groups spread across the archipelago. Religious moderation is recognized as a key approach to addressing issues of radicalism and extremism. This study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process of incorporating religious moderation values into the curriculum for students in the Islamic Education Management Department at IAIN Kerinci, Jambi Province. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The validity of the data was ensured through internal validity measures, including data triangulation, member checking, repeated observations at the research site, peer debriefing, involvement of informants in various stages of the research, and researcher bias clarification. The results reveal that the teaching style of lecturers at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FTIK) of IAIN Kerinci plays a crucial role in shaping students to become moderate, tolerant, and peace-loving individuals. Lecturers employ interactive and participatory teaching approaches, integrating religious moderation values into the curriculum using various instructional methods. Factors contributing to the internalization of these values among students include participation in extracurricular activities and campus organizations that promote interfaith dialogue, as well as involvement in social service activities with communities of different religious backgrounds.

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INTRODUCTION

The diversity of Indonesian creates a rich and complex culture, with various traditions, customs, and beliefs coexisting. While these differences often pose challenges to achieving national unity, they also serve as a strength that enriches Indonesia's identity as a pluralistic and tolerant nation. Efforts by both the

government and society to maintain harmony and address conflicts play a crucial role in preserving the nation's integrity and stability.

In the current era of growing globalization, the principles of religious moderation play a vital role in fostering harmony among individuals from diverse religious backgrounds. Students, as

catalysts of societal transformation, hold a crucial role in understanding, respecting, and applying the principles of religious moderation in their daily lives, including within the context of academic settings on campus (Hasanah & Abbas, 2023).

State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri, PTKIN) in Indonesia play a crucial role in shaping students' understanding, attitudes, and perspectives on religion. The primary focus is on the internalization of values that promote religious moderation. Given the complex diversity of the student body, it is essential to understand how the assimilation of these ideals influences interactions between students from different religious and cultural backgrounds (Widodo et al., 2020).

PTKIN not only serves as educational institutions that provide religious knowledge but also bears the responsibility of shaping students into individuals who embody qualities of tolerance, inclusivity, and a deep understanding of religious and cultural diversity. A key element in this context is the assimilation of principles of religious moderation among the students (Handrianto et al., 2023).

Understanding and embracing the principles of religious moderation serves as a fundamental basis for developing students' religious character. These ideals act as a framework for implementing religious teachings and as a foundation for fostering tolerance, cooperation, and mutual respect among students. The process of internalizing religious moderation values involves students

integrating and applying these balanced and tolerant religious principles in their daily campus life (Riyawi & Febriansyah, 2023).

A 2021 study conducted by the Center for Islamic and Societal Studies (PPIM) at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta found that approximately 30.16% of Indonesian students exhibited low levels of religious tolerance or displayed intolerant attitudes. The study revealed that 24.89% of students showed poor religious tolerance, while 5.27% demonstrated even lower levels of tolerance. When considering the type of educational institutions, it was observed that religious-based, private, and public universities tend to have the highest concentration of students displaying intolerant attitudes. The investigation into the integration of moderate religious principles continues to captivate many organizations and communities. This research offers new perspectives on understanding, reinforcing, and incorporating religious moderation principles into educational resources used by Islamic religious institutions (Abdallah, 2021).

Previous studies, as seen in the works of Astuti & Ismail (2023), Hanafi et al. (2022), and Subchi et al. (2022), primarily focus on the general concept of religious moderation. However, specific research detailing the internalization of religious moderation values into students' coursework remains relatively limited.

The internalization process of religious moderation values into students' learning materials is crucial within higher education environments. The objective of

this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process of integrating religious moderation values into the curriculum for students in the Islamic Education Management Department (MPI) at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Kerinci, Jambi Province. The aim is that the findings of this research can serve as a foundation for creating more inclusive educational practices and fostering unity among students.

METHOD

The methodology employed in this study utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive qualitative research is a methodological framework that aims to provide a detailed depiction of a phenomenon or event (Creswell, 2016).

The choice of a descriptive qualitative approach aligns with the objective of this research, which seeks to understand and uncover how the internalization of religious moderation values is integrated into students' coursework. This study was conducted among students in the Islamic Education Management Department at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Kerinci, Jambi Province.

The informants in this research consist of individuals involved in the process of internalizing religious moderation values within the coursework, specifically in the subjects of Aqidah and Akhlak during the first semester. A total of six informants were selected from classes MPI 1A and MPI 1B, including two lecturers for the Aqidah and Akhlak course, two students from class MPI 1A, and two students from class MPI 1B. The

informants were chosen using purposive sampling techniques. This selection was made to ensure that the informants possessed the ability to provide accurate and reliable information pertinent to the specific context of the study and had a profound understanding of the research topic and focus (Leavy, 2017).

Primary data were sourced from the informants who provided insights regarding the internalization of religious moderation values within the Aqidah and Akhlak coursework. Secondary data generally consisted of supplementary information in the form of documents such as semester learning plans, final exam scores, archives, and activity data related to the coursework in Aqidah and Akhlak.

This research employed various data collection methods, including observation, interviews, and documentation. The researcher conducted observations by closely monitoring the daily activities of the informants, particularly focusing on classroom activities related to the Aqidah and Akhlak course in the first semester for classes MPI 1A and MPI 1B. Semi-structured interviews were utilized, where informants were tasked with gathering further insights into the research topic through direct listening and engaging in question-and-answer sessions. Interview guidelines served as a reference throughout the research. Documentation included data on classroom activities, photographs of classroom engagements, textbooks, magazines, and other literature that supports this study.

The data analysis technique in this research comprises six steps: (1) processing and preparing the data; (2)

reading the data; (3) coding the data; (4) applying the coding process to describe the setting, categories, and themes to be analyzed; (5) presenting the descriptions and themes in narrative form; and (6) interpreting the data to derive meaning (Creswell, 2016).

Data validity was ensured through internal validation methods, which included: (1) data triangulation, (2) member checking, (3) repeated observations at the research site, (4) peer checking, (5) involving informants in most stages of the research (participatory patterns), and (6) clarifying researcher bias (Creswell, 2015).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After transcribing the interview results, the researcher identified themes, patterns, and categories that emerged from the collected data. Coding assists in organizing diverse and complex data into smaller, manageable units, thereby facilitating the researcher in uncovering deeper meanings. The coding process can be illustrated in the following table 1:

Tabel 1. Data Coding

Transcript	Category
Informant 1: I have a Course Learning Plan (RPS) for this subject.	Lecturer's Style in the Process of Internalizing Religious Moderation
Informant 2: I employ several approaches, including pedagogical approaches.	
Informant 3: Yes, I utilize various diverse sources, such as sacred texts.	
Informant 4: Yes, my Course Learning Plan (RPS) includes the objectives or goals related to the behavior models that students need to apply.	

Informant 1: Media and technology have a significant impact on students' understanding of religious moderation.

Factors Influencing the Internalization of Moderation

Informant 2: Yes, I implement several practices to create an inclusive and open learning environment.

Informant 4: Some students are involved in extracurricular activities or campus organizations that promote interfaith dialogue and values of tolerance.

To ensure the credibility of the research, we employed several methods, namely triangulation and member reflection. In the triangulation of information, we compared our observations and knowledge about the participants with their interview responses to avoid subjective bias and to test the consistency of the findings. For member reflection, we provided the interview responses for member checking by involving all informants to offer feedback, ensuring that their perspectives were accurately represented and reflected their actual experiences.

Lecturers' Teaching Styles in Imparting Values of Religious Moderation

In the effort to cultivate moderate and tolerant students, the lecturers' teaching styles in imparting values of religious moderation play a crucial role. The teaching methods employed by lecturers not only encompass theoretical material delivery but also involve interactive and participatory approaches that inspire and equip students with a profound understanding of the

significance of moderation in religious life.

Curriculum planning and development are essential to ensure that the curriculum not only meets academic standards but is also relevant to the demands of the times. The following interview results illustrate how the values of religious moderation are integrated into the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) and implemented through various teaching methods in the classroom:

"Yes, certainly. I have an RPS for this course, and instilling the values of religious moderation is one of the key points. I incorporate into the lecture material." (Informant 1).

Teaching methods focus on the approaches and techniques used by educators to facilitate the learning process. The following interview results illustrate the diverse strategies employed to accommodate the characteristics of students and the material being taught, as well as to encourage active participation through group discussions and dialogic approaches:

"I use several approaches, including pedagogical approaches: I employ various teaching methods that align with the characteristics of the students and the material being taught. Andragogical approaches: I encourage students to learn independently and take responsibility for their own learning process. Dialogic approaches: I create an open and inclusive classroom atmosphere, allowing students to feel comfortable discussing and sharing their opinions." (Informant 2).

To provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of religious

moderation, as well as beliefs and ethics, our informants articulated their use of various resources and teaching materials. Based on the interview results, it was revealed that they utilize a range of materials that include:

1. The holy Quran serves as a foundational text illustrating the principles of religious moderation. For instance, Allah SWT emphasizes the importance of balance and justice in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 143, which states:

"And thus We have made you a just nation that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And Allah would not make your faith in vain. Indeed, Allah is Forbearing and Merciful."

This verse underscores the significance of embodying justice and serving as a witness to the values of moderation in religious practice, aligning with the broader aim of fostering an inclusive and tolerant community among diverse religious backgrounds.

2. Philosophical texts from various schools of thought are used to enrich students' understanding of religious moderation.
3. Contemporary literature addressing current issues related to religion and moderation
4. The Quran and Hadith are utilized as primary sources in the courses on Aqidah and Akhlaq to provide a strong foundation.

5. Classic books are used to complement the understanding of traditional concepts in Islam.
6. Examples from current news discussed in society, such as ethics in social media, honesty in the business world, or integrity in politics, are employed to illustrate the practical application of the principles of Aqidah and Akhlaq in Islam.

With this diverse approach, it is anticipated that students will develop a comprehensive and applicable understanding of religious moderation, as well as the principles of Aqeedah and Akhlaq in their daily lives. The evaluation and learning objectives of this course are designed to ensure that students not only grasp academic concepts but also apply the values of religious moderation in their everyday existence. Based on interviews with lecturers, the primary objectives anticipated for students include a profound understanding of religious moderation, an appreciation for diversity, effective communication and dialogue skills, peaceful conflict resolution, and the capacity to act as agents of peace within the community. Evaluations of students' understanding indicate variability in their levels of comprehension.

In terms of integration within the curriculum and learning process, the values of religious moderation are incorporated into the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) as a crucial point in the course material. Lecturers employ various interactive and participatory teaching methods to convey the subject of religious moderation, including class discussions, presentations, and case studies. The course material is linked to real-world, contextual

examples relevant to the students' daily lives. Furthermore, lecturers utilize a diverse range of learning resources, such as sacred texts, philosophical writings, contemporary literature, and current news, to enrich students' understanding of religious moderation.

In instilling the values of religious moderation, lecturers strive to embed these principles within students through various means, such as explaining the definitions, principles, and significance of religious moderation. Lecturers also encourage students to comprehend and practice religious teachings in a balanced manner, avoiding extremism, appreciating differences, and providing concrete examples of how to apply the values of religious moderation in daily life. An open and inclusive classroom atmosphere is fostered to ensure that students feel comfortable discussing and sharing their opinions.

A key aspect of this process is how lecturers' model and transmit the values of religious moderation to their students. Effective teaching of these values requires not only subject matter expertise but also a nuanced understanding of how cultural and religious factors shape students' perspectives and learning styles (Hasibuan et al., 2023). As noted by one source; by sharing such experiences with new classes and faculty, opportunities arise for discussion and commentary on how our religion- and culture-based values are often reflected in our behaviors. Lecturers who are capable of creating a space for such discussions, and who embody the principles of moderation and inclusion,

can have a profound impact on students' worldviews and interfaith understanding.

Moreover, the research conducted by Walker et al. (2021) elucidates that infusing transcendent values into higher education pedagogy can serve as a crucial bridge, allowing the "religious voice" to find legitimacy within the secular academy. Lecturers who are firmly grounded in their own spiritual or moral principles, and who can effectively translate these into their teaching, may excel in fostering moderation and tolerance among their students.

The study by Mukhibat et al. (2024) further explains that religious moderation, along with values of tolerance and cultural accommodation within academic programs, supports governmental efforts to minimize religious conservatism and intolerance at the higher education level in Indonesia. Ultimately, the challenge for educators lies in navigating the diversity of their classrooms in a manner that fosters mutual respect, open-mindedness, and a commitment to the values of religious moderation. By leveraging their expertise, interpersonal skills, and spiritual sensitivity, lecturers can play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of graduates who are religiously literate and culturally competent.

By sharing their own experiences in navigating religious and cultural diversity, lecturers can exemplify effective strategies for bridging gaps and embracing pluralism. Discussing issues of authority, gender, communication styles, and emotional expression can assist students in developing cultural competence and prepare them for the realities of an

interconnected world (Doukanari et al., 2021).

Additionally, the values inherent in teaching can serve as a gateway to exploring the role of religion and spirituality within the academic realm. Transcendent values such as justice, compassion, and humility may have a legitimate place in the classroom, guiding both the content and execution of instruction (Hidayatullah & Nurkamto, 2020).

Ultimately, the power of lecturers to shape students' worldviews and behaviors cannot be overstated. By strategically integrating lessons on religious moderation, cultural sensitivity, and universal values, lecturers can cultivate a new generation of global citizens equipped to navigate our complex and pluralistic society.

Factors Influencing the Internalization of Religious Moderation Values

The internalization of religious moderation values is influenced by a variety of complex factors. These include social environment, religious education, and personal experiences that shape the understanding and practice of religious moderation values in everyday life. Moderation serves as a valid contributor that can explain why some individuals do not violate ethical standards related to religious practices and discourses (Karaosmanoglu et al., 2017).

Student experiences and activities are crucial aspects of self-development during college. Interview results reveal that some students are actively involved in extracurricular activities and campus organizations aimed at promoting

interfaith dialogue and tolerance values. For instance, there are student organizations that regularly hold seminars and discussions on interreligious harmony, as well as community service activities that involve people from various faiths. Additionally, in the course on Aqidah and Ethics, students also engage in various field activities and projects related to religious moderation, such as visits to places of worship, field research, workshops and seminars, and community service projects. These activities not only enrich the students' experiences but also support efforts to create an inclusive and harmonious environment on campus.

"Some students participate in extracurricular activities or campus organizations that promote interfaith dialogue and tolerance values. For example, there are student organizations that organize seminars and discussions about interreligious harmony, along with community service activities with people from various religions." (Informant 4).

The influence of media and technology on students' understanding of religious moderation cannot be overlooked. From the interviews, it was found that media and technology play a significant role in providing valuable sources of information regarding various religions and cultures. Students can utilize the internet and social media to learn about the history, traditions, and values of other religions, which ultimately broadens their perspectives and enhances their understanding of the importance of religious moderation.

"Media and technology have a significant impact on students'

understanding of religious moderation. On one hand, media and technology can serve as useful sources of information about various religions and cultures. Students can learn about the history, traditions, and values of other religions through the internet and social media." (Informant 1).

The learning environment and the attitudes of educators play a crucial role in creating an inclusive and open atmosphere for students. Interview results indicate that educators strive to implement various practices to achieve this goal. They provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in learning, respect differing opinions and beliefs, and create a safe and comfortable classroom environment for everyone (Zidni & Rojudin, 2023).

Moreover, educators also encourage students to respect and appreciate one another. These practices aim to build an academic environment that supports positive development for all students.

"Yes, I implement several practices to create an inclusive and open learning environment, such as providing equal opportunities for all students to participate in learning, respecting differing opinions and beliefs, creating a safe and comfortable classroom environment for all students, and encouraging students to respect and appreciate one another." (Informant 2).

The moderate attitude of educators serves as an important role model for students in both academic and daily life. From the interviews, it is evident that educator's endeavor to demonstrate a moderate attitude in their interactions with

others and in their personal lives. They are always open to learning and engaging in dialogue with individuals from various religions and beliefs. In delivering the material, educators use lecture methods to explain important concepts in Aqeedah (faith) and Ethics (morality and ethics), as well as utilize presentation slides to assist in visualizing the material. This moderate attitude and teaching method support the creation of a harmonious and inclusive learning environment.

"I strive to always demonstrate a moderate attitude in daily life, both in interactions with others and in my personal life. I am also always open to learning and engaging in dialogue with individuals from various religions and beliefs." (Informant 1).

Based on the interviews and observations above, the internalization of religious moderation values is influenced by diverse factors. One significant factor is the experiences and activities of students during their college years. Activities such as involvement in campus organizations that promote interfaith dialogue and community service with individuals from various religions can cultivate a deep understanding of religious moderation values. Additionally, media and technology also play an important role in broadening students' insights into various religions, through the access to information available on the internet and social media. An inclusive learning environment and the moderate attitudes of educators provide positive examples for students in practicing religious moderation values in their daily lives.

The internalization of religious moderation values among students is an important aspect of fostering interfaith dialogue and strengthening religious relations in the modern era. A study conducted by Cole (2021) highlights the impact of various factors, including internationalization, globalization, and increasing diversity in local communities, on the religious experiences of minority groups such as Muslim students. Data from this study reveals intriguing developments, such as increased engagement among Muslims and collaboration with fellow students, indicating that universities may consider more positive ways to engage with perceived differences.

One key factor shaping the internalization of religious moderation values is the first-year college experience. Opportunities for engagement and interfaith interaction with diverse peers at the beginning of the college journey can significantly influence students' orientation toward pluralism and their appreciation of religious differences (Wasehudin & Upiyani, 2024).

Executives should prioritize institutional commitments to religious diversity, such as initiating interfaith student groups, providing community service opportunities, and incorporating religious diversity into campus events. Furthermore, mid-level student affairs practitioners should be aware that positive changes in the appreciation of Muslims are often most pronounced among first-year students (Plante, 2020).

While integration into campus culture is often seen as a marker of success, research has shown that international students, particularly those in their senior years, can maintain their cultural integrity while positively embracing a new environment. These students do not view integration as a process of assimilation but rather as an opportunity to encourage cultural exchange and preserve their unique identities (Trowler et al., 2022).

Additionally, the development of self-authored worldviews among students, which includes their religious, spiritual, and ideological narratives, is closely related to the internalization of religious moderation values. Institutional commitments to interfaith learning and development, such as providing opportunities for students to participate in at least two formal interfaith co-curricular experiences during their first year, have been found to be associated with positive developmental benefits in this area (Mayhew & Rockenbach, 2021).

The internalization of religious moderation values among students is a process influenced by various factors, including first-year experiences, international student experiences, and the development of self-authored worldviews. By understanding and addressing these factors, universities can play a vital role in promoting interfaith dialogue, fostering religious tolerance, and preparing students to navigate the increasingly diverse world they will encounter beyond campus.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of educators'

teaching styles in cultivating moderate, tolerant, and peace-loving students through the internalization of religious moderation values. The application of interactive and participatory learning methodologies allows educators to effectively integrate religious moderation into the curriculum. The instructional content encompasses teachings on Aqeedah, ethics, and religious moderation, employing diverse sources and contextual case studies to enrich student understanding.

The internalization of these values is significantly influenced by student engagement in extracurricular activities and campus organizations that foster interfaith dialogue, alongside participation in community service initiatives with individuals from various religious backgrounds. Additionally, the impact of media and technology, particularly the internet and social media, is instrumental in broadening students' perspectives on different religions. The inclusive demeanor of educators, which encourages respect for diverse opinions and beliefs, further contributes to the establishment of moderation values among students.

This study advocates for the enhancement of harmony and interfaith tolerance within the academic setting. It is imperative to systematically incorporate religious moderation values into higher education curricula to maintain relevance in contemporary society. Moreover, the professional development of educators through workshops and training should be prioritized to facilitate the innovative integration of these values into their teaching practices, ultimately fostering

more effective discussions and promoting a culture of understanding and respect.

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