

ACTUALIZING RELIGIOUS MODERATION FROM THE AHLUSSUNNAH WAL JAMAAH PERSPECTIVE IN S1 PIAUD AND S2 ISLAMIC EDUCATION LECTURES AT UNIVERSITAS ISLAM ZAINUL HASAN GENGGONG PROBOLINGGO

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Abstract

Keywords:

Religious Moderation,
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Religious moderation has become a strategic issue in contemporary Islamic education, particularly in response to intolerance, exclusivism, and rigid religious interpretations in academic and social life. From the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective, religious moderation is not merely a sociopolitical slogan, but a theological, ethical, and pedagogical framework rooted in balance, justice, tolerance, and contextual understanding. This study aims to examine the actualization of religious moderation from the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective in the lectures of the undergraduate program in Islamic Early Childhood Education and the master's program in Islamic Education at Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong Probolinggo. This research employed a qualitative library research design. Data were collected from classical and contemporary literature on Sunni theology, Islamic educational thought, and the discourse of religious moderation, and then analyzed using content analysis through concept identification, thematic classification, and interpretive analysis. The findings show that the actualization of religious moderation in lectures is grounded in the values of tawassuth, tawazun, i'tidal, and tasamuh. In S1 PIAUD, these values are reflected in child-friendly pedagogy, inclusive learning habits, and character formation. In S2 Islamic Education, they are reflected in academic dialogue, methodological openness, and contextual Islamic educational analysis. Therefore, the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective provides a strong conceptual and pedagogical foundation for integrating religious moderation into higher education lectures.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation has become one of the most urgent themes in contemporary Islamic education (Ramadani & Sofa, 2025). The expansion of digital information, social polarization, exclusivist attitudes, and rigid religious expressions has made educational institutions increasingly responsible for shaping learners who are not only religiously committed but also socially responsible and intellectually balanced. In this context, religious moderation is not a peripheral concern (S. Sholeha & Sofa, 2025). It is central to the development of Islamic education because the classroom is one of the main spaces in which religious understanding is formed, transmitted, and practiced (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025b).

Islamic education, particularly in higher education, cannot be separated from broader social and intellectual realities (Agustini & Sofa, 2025). Universities are not merely institutions for transferring knowledge, but also arenas for forming academic character, moral disposition, and patterns of social engagement (Ilahi et al., 2024). Therefore, the discussion of religious moderation in lectures becomes highly relevant. It concerns not only what is taught, but also how religious ideas are interpreted, how differences are negotiated, and how academic culture is built (Zaini & Sofa, 2024). In this regard, moderation is not simply a topic of study but also a pedagogical orientation (Sofa, 2024).

From the perspective of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, moderation is deeply rooted in Islamic theological and intellectual tradition (Hanafi & Sofa, 2024). This perspective emphasizes a middle path in understanding religion, balancing revelation and reason, individual devotion and social responsibility, as well as commitment to religious truth and openness to legitimate diversity (Sukandarman et al., 2024). Thus, religious moderation in the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah tradition is not a recent construct (Agustini & Sofa, 2024). It is embedded in the classical heritage of Sunni scholarship and offers a relevant framework for responding to contemporary educational challenges (Agustini & Sofa, 2024).

The issue becomes even more important when it is connected to two academic programs with distinct yet related educational orientations, namely S1 PIAUD and S2 Islamic Education at Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong Probolinggo. In S1 PIAUD, lectures are designed to prepare future educators of young children, which means that religious moderation must be translated into compassionate, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate pedagogy. In S2 Islamic Education, lectures serve not only to deepen students' understanding of Islamic educational thought, but also to strengthen their academic capacity to respond to contemporary problems through moderate and contextual perspectives (Arifin & Sofa, 2024).

Despite the importance of this issue, the actualization of religious moderation in lectures is not always clearly conceptualized (Sofa & Aziz, 2024). In many cases, moderation is discussed as a broad moral value, but it is not sufficiently connected to the structure of lectures, the teaching methods used, or the academic culture cultivated within specific programs (Sofa & Febrianti, 2025). As a result, there remains a gap between the discourse of moderation and its implementation in classroom practice (Sofa & Sugianto, 2024). This gap constitutes the main rationale for the present study (Bulqiyah & Sofa, 2025).

Based on this background, this article seeks to examine how religious moderation from the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective can be actualized in lectures at S1 PIAUD

and S2 Islamic Education at Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong Probolinggo. The study aims to explain the conceptual foundations of moderation, its educational relevance, and its practical significance for lecture development in both programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of religious moderation in Islam is closely associated with the principle of *wasatiyyah*, which denotes balance, justice, and the rejection of extreme positions (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025a). Within the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah tradition, this principle is elaborated not only in theological discourse but also in jurisprudence, ethics, and educational thought (Sofa et al., 2025). Thus, moderation is understood as a pattern of religious reasoning and conduct that avoids rigidity, excess, and exclusion while maintaining commitment to Islamic teachings (Jannah & Sofa, 2025).

A key theological basis for this study is found in the thought of Imam Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari and Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi. Both scholars played major roles in the formation of Sunni theology and demonstrated that sound religious understanding requires a balance between revelation and reason. Al-Ash'ari emphasized the authority of revelation while still recognizing the function of reason. Al-Maturidi gave reason a broader role, yet always within the boundaries of scriptural truth. Their perspectives indicate that moderation in Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah is rooted in equilibrium, not extremity. This theological balance provides an important foundation for Islamic education, especially in lecture settings where students are expected to think critically without losing their doctrinal grounding (Slama & Sofa, 2025).

The legal tradition of Sunni Islam also contributes to the understanding of moderation. Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam al-Shafi'i, and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal all placed the Qur'an and Hadith at the center of legal reasoning, yet differed in methodological emphasis. These differences demonstrate that legitimate diversity is intrinsic to Sunni scholarship. Such diversity is highly relevant to the discourse of moderation because it teaches respect for scholarly plurality and discourages absolutist interpretations. In lectures, this legacy can foster academic maturity, dialogical attitudes, and appreciation for the plurality of viewpoints within Islamic thought (Lathifah & Shofa, 2025).

In the field of Islamic education, Imam al-Ghazali provides an essential framework for understanding moderation as an educational orientation. Al-Ghazali viewed education as a process of integrating knowledge, morality, and spiritual formation. In his view, education must not only inform the mind but also refine the soul and shape ethical conduct. This perspective supports the argument that religious moderation should not be limited to a social slogan. It must be internalized through the cultivation of balanced character and responsible religiosity in the learning process (Sudaryanto & Sofa, 2025).

The educational philosophy of Omar Mohammad al-Toumy al-Syaibany is also relevant. Al-Syaibany argued that Islamic education must aim at the holistic development of the human person across spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions. This view suggests that moderation must be treated as a holistic educational principle rather than a narrow subject of discussion. In the lecture context, moderation should influence learning objectives, lecturer roles, student interaction, and the general atmosphere of academic engagement (Parawansah & Sofa, 2025).

Abdurrahman al-Nahlawi further deepens the pedagogical dimension of this study. He emphasized educational methods derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, including

example, habituation, dialogue, gradual guidance, and meaningful advice. These methods are particularly significant for S1 PIAUD because early childhood teacher education requires a pedagogical framework that is compassionate, non-coercive, and developmentally appropriate. Religious moderation becomes relevant here as a style of education that forms values through kindness and continuity rather than fear and harshness (Ichsan, 2026).

Contemporary Muslim scholars also contribute to the conceptualization of moderation in education. M. Quraish Shihab emphasized the contextual understanding of Qur'anic messages, especially the ethical values of mercy, justice, and wisdom. Amin Abdullah proposed an integrative approach in Islamic studies that connects the normative dimension of religion with historical and social contexts. Their ideas are particularly useful in relation to S2 Islamic Education, where lectures are expected to produce scholarly reflection, contextual interpretation, and responsible responses to contemporary educational issues (I. Sholeha & Sofa, 2025).

From the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective, religious moderation is commonly expressed through four core values: *tawassuth* (the middle path), *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice and uprightness), and *tasamuh* (tolerance). These values form the main theoretical lens of the study. They indicate that moderation is not passive neutrality, but an active commitment to balance, fairness, and respectful engagement. In lecture settings, these values can shape curriculum content, interaction patterns, and academic culture in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs (Nisak & Sofa, 2025).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a library research design. The study focused on conceptual analysis of the actualization of religious moderation from the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective in lecture settings at S1 PIAUD and S2 Islamic Education.

The object of the study consisted of ideas, concepts, and scholarly arguments found in classical and contemporary literature on Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, Sunni theology, Islamic educational thought, and religious moderation. Primary data were taken from authoritative works of Muslim scholars and educational thinkers. Secondary data were obtained from scholarly books, journal articles, and related academic publications discussing Islamic education and moderation (Putri & Sofa, 2025).

Data were collected through documentation techniques, namely by identifying, selecting, reading, classifying, and recording relevant texts. The collected data were then analyzed using content analysis (Ramadani & Sofa, 2025). The first step involved data reduction by selecting the most relevant references for the research focus. The second step involved thematic classification into several central themes, such as the concept of religious moderation, Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah values, actualization in S1 PIAUD lectures, and actualization in S2 Islamic Education lectures. The final step involved interpretive analysis to explain the relevance and implementation of moderation in lecture contexts (Parawansah & Sofa, 2024).

Because the study was based on library materials rather than fieldwork, the validity of the analysis was maintained through source adequacy, conceptual consistency, and coherence of argumentation among the theoretical perspectives used. The data is depicted as the following diagram:

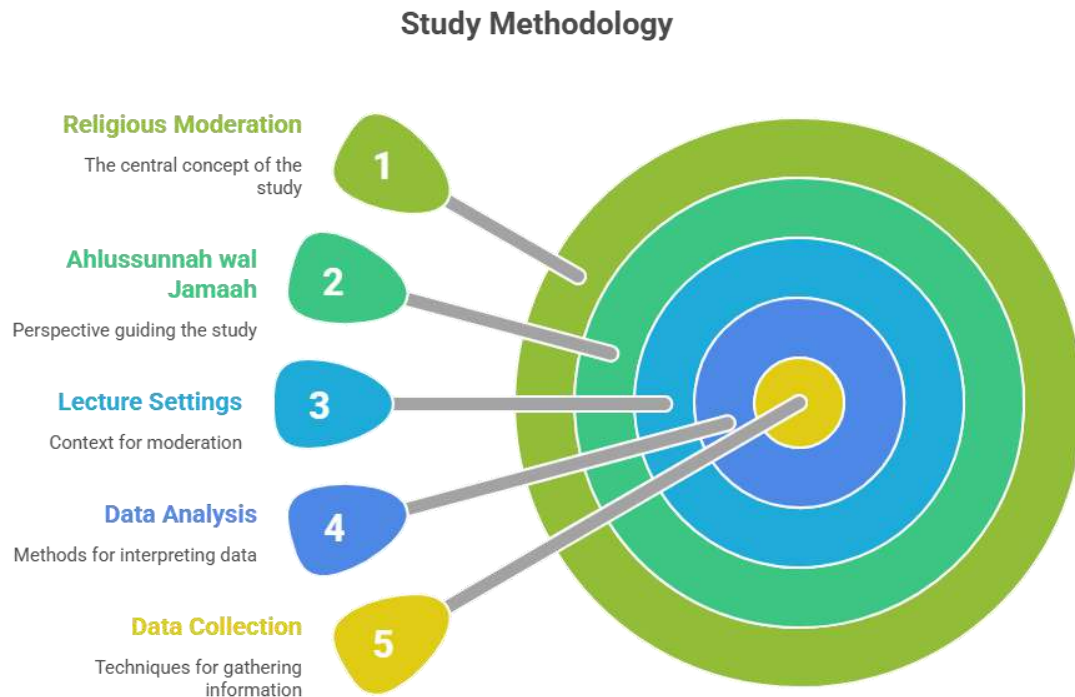


Diagram 1. Study Methodology

Diagram 1 presents the methodological flow of this study. The research employed a qualitative approach with a library research design, focusing on the conceptual analysis of the actualization of religious moderation from the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective in lecture settings at S1 PIAUD and S2 Islamic Education. The diagram begins with the determination of the research focus, namely religious moderation, Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah values, and their relevance to higher education lectures.

The second part of the diagram illustrates the object and sources of data. The object of the study consists of ideas, concepts, and scholarly arguments contained in classical and contemporary literature on Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, Sunni theology, Islamic educational thought, and religious moderation. The data sources are divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary data are derived from authoritative works of Muslim scholars and Islamic educational thinkers, while secondary data are obtained from books, journal articles, and other academic publications related to Islamic education and moderation (Sofa et al., 2021).

The third part of the diagram shows the data collection process. This study used documentation techniques, including identifying, selecting, reading, classifying, and recording relevant texts. This stage ensured that only literature directly related to the research problem was included in the analysis.

The fourth part of the diagram explains the data analysis procedure using content analysis. The analysis was carried out in three stages. The first stage was data reduction, in which the researcher selected the most relevant references according to the focus of the study. The second stage was thematic classification, where the collected data were organized into major themes such as the concept of religious moderation, the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, the actualization of moderation in S1 PIAUD lectures, and the actualization of moderation in S2 Islamic Education lectures. The third stage was interpretive analysis, which was used to explain the relevance, meaning, and

implementation of religious moderation in lecture contexts.

The final part of the diagram emphasizes the validity of the analysis. Since the study was based on library materials rather than fieldwork, the credibility of the findings was maintained through source adequacy, conceptual consistency, and coherence of argumentation among the theoretical perspectives used. Therefore, Diagram 1 demonstrates that the research method was designed systematically to connect the conceptual foundations of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah moderation with its educational relevance in lecture practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study found that religious moderation in the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective functions as both a conceptual foundation and a practical orientation for lectures in Islamic higher education. It is not merely a doctrinal principle stated abstractly in theological texts, but a living framework that can shape the way lectures are designed, conducted, and evaluated. In this sense, actualizing moderation in lectures means transforming classical Sunni values into educational practice.

At the conceptual level, religious moderation in the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah tradition is grounded in four interconnected values: *tawassuth*, *tawazun*, *i'tidal*, and *tasamuh*. *Tawassuth* indicates the rejection of excess and deficiency in religious understanding. *Tawazun* reflects the need to balance spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects of education. *I'tidal* points to fairness, proportionality, and moral uprightness in interpreting and responding to difference. *Tasamuh* encourages tolerance and respect for diversity within legitimate religious and intellectual boundaries. These values are particularly relevant to lecture settings because lectures are not only spaces for transmitting content but also arenas for shaping attitudes and patterns of reasoning.

In S1 PIAUD lectures, the actualization of religious moderation is primarily pedagogical. The program prepares future educators for early childhood contexts, where sensitivity, empathy, and developmental awareness are essential. Therefore, moderation must be reflected in the pedagogical vision of lectures. Students need to be trained to understand religion not as a rigid set of commands imposed through fear, but as a value system that can be introduced to children through compassion, habituation, good example, and inclusive interaction. In this context, moderation is actualized by encouraging future teachers to create child-friendly religious learning environments that prioritize affection, respect, patience, and simplicity.

Moreover, S1 PIAUD lectures can actualize moderation by integrating it into discussions of character education, classroom management, early religious habituation, and educational psychology. Students may be encouraged to understand that young children build their initial perceptions of religion through daily experiences, not through abstract doctrinal debate. For that reason, a moderate lecture orientation will guide them to develop teaching strategies that introduce prayer, politeness, sharing, empathy, and respect in gentle and meaningful ways. Here, the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective becomes relevant not only as content, but as a pedagogical ethos.

In S2 Islamic Education lectures, the actualization of moderation becomes more epistemological and methodological. Postgraduate students are expected to examine Islamic educational thought critically, develop research perspectives, and respond to contemporary problems in education (Saifullah & Sofa, 2025). In this context, moderation is actualized when lectures cultivate academic openness, contextual analysis, and

dialogical engagement with diverse viewpoints. Students are not only expected to defend Islamic tradition, but also to understand how that tradition can engage contemporary realities such as digital culture, pluralism, curriculum transformation, and religious polarization (Firdausiyah & Sofa, 2025).

This means that moderation in S2 lectures can be reflected in the selection of reading materials, the use of comparative perspectives, the encouragement of critical discussion, and the development of contextual argumentation (Ramadhani & Sofa, 2025). The Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective provides a strong basis for this because it does not reject intellectual diversity (Ilahi et al., 2025). Instead, it frames diversity within a structure of balance and ethical responsibility. In this way, postgraduate lectures can foster scholars who are rooted in Islamic tradition while remaining capable of engaging modern educational realities constructively (Shalawati & Sofa, 2025).

The study also shows that the actualization of moderation in lectures is closely linked to academic culture. Lectures do not operate in isolation. They are part of a wider environment in which students observe how lecturers respond to disagreement, how institutions frame religious discourse, and how academic dialogue is cultivated. Therefore, the actualization of moderation in S1 PIAUD and S2 Islamic Education also requires a supportive academic culture characterized by respect, openness, seriousness in scholarship, and avoidance of hostile or polarizing discourse. Within Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong Probolinggo, this can be strengthened by aligning lecture content, lecturer attitudes, and institutional academic values with the moderate tradition of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah (Sukandarman et al., 2024).

Another important finding is that the actualization of moderation differs in emphasis between the two programs while still sharing the same foundational values. In S1 PIAUD, the emphasis is on pedagogical formation, emotional sensitivity, and the development of inclusive habits that can later be transmitted to children. In S2 Islamic Education, the emphasis is on scholarly formation, methodological maturity, and the ability to produce contextual educational analysis. Thus, moderation is not applied uniformly but contextually, according to the academic level and professional orientation of each program (Zakiyullah & Sofa, 2025).

Overall, the study indicates that actualizing religious moderation from the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective in lectures is both possible and necessary. It allows lectures to function not only as sites of content delivery but as spaces for character formation, scholarly development, and the cultivation of responsible religiosity. Such actualization strengthens the relevance of Islamic higher education in responding to contemporary social and intellectual challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the actualization of religious moderation from the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah perspective in lectures at S1 PIAUD and S2 Islamic Education is both conceptually significant and educationally necessary. Religious moderation in this tradition is rooted in the values of *tawassuth*, *tawazun*, *i'tidal*, and *tasamuh*, all of which provide a balanced and constructive framework for Islamic higher education.

In S1 PIAUD, these values are actualized through child-friendly pedagogy, compassionate religious learning, and the formation of inclusive educational habits. In S2 Islamic Education, they are actualized through academic dialogue, methodological openness, and contextual engagement with contemporary educational issues. Thus, the

same moderate framework serves different but complementary functions in undergraduate and postgraduate lecture contexts.

The practical implication of this study is the need to integrate moderation values into lecture planning, teaching methods, academic interaction, and institutional culture. The limitation of this study lies in its library-based design, which does not yet include empirical observation of lecture practices. Future studies may therefore examine how moderation is implemented directly in classrooms, curriculum design, and academic life at Islamic universities.

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