

## PEDAGOGY OF MODERATION : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULA IN EGYPT, INDONESIA, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

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### Abstract

This study examines the “Pedagogy of Moderation” as reflected in Islamic education curricula in Egypt, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom, three contexts that represent distinct historical, political, and pedagogical traditions. The research is grounded in the concern that contemporary Islamic education faces increasing pressure to cultivate balanced religious understanding while navigating ideological polarization, identity politics, and growing global interconnectivity. A clearer comparative understanding is required to evaluate how different educational systems translate moderation into curricular objectives, instructional strategies, and competency outcomes. The study aims to identify the conceptual foundations, pedagogical orientations, and policy frameworks that shape the integration of moderation values across the three countries’ curricula. Using a qualitative comparative case study design, the research employs document analysis of national Islamic education curricula, thematic coding of policy texts, and expert interviews with curriculum developers and Islamic education scholars in each country. The findings indicate substantial variation in how moderation is framed: Egypt emphasizes jurisprudential stability grounded in Al-Azhar’s authoritative tradition; Indonesia situates moderation within pluralistic civic nationhood and interfaith harmony; the United Kingdom adopts a critical-dialogical approach that integrates moderation with intercultural citizenship and counter-extremism education. Despite these differences, all three systems share a common shift toward reflective pedagogy, dialogical learning, and competency-based frameworks that promote ethical discernment and social cohesion. The study concludes that the Pedagogy of Moderation requires not only doctrinal balance, but also a transformative educational paradigm that integrates critical inquiry, contextual interpretation, and global citizenship competencies. This comparative analysis contributes to strengthening theoretical clarity and guiding future curriculum reform in Islamic education.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Moderation, Global Citizenship



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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic education across the globe has increasingly emphasized the need for cultivating balanced, contextual, and ethically grounded religious understanding (Gibbs dkk., 2024). Many nations incorporate “moderation” as a foundational value to counteract ideological polarization, violent extremism, and narrow scripturalism that may distort Islamic teachings (Yusuf dkk., 2025). Curricula in Muslim-majority and minority contexts alike recognize moderation as a stabilizing principle that aligns with broader educational aspirations for social cohesion.

Islamic education in Egypt is shaped by the long-standing intellectual authority of Al-Azhar, which anchors its curriculum in a jurisprudential tradition emphasizing textual mastery, doctrinal stability, and calibrated hermeneutics (Amin, 2024). The Egyptian model is widely acknowledged as a guardian of theological orthodoxy and a transmitter of classical Islamic sciences, forming a distinctive pedagogical culture that privileges continuity and orthopraxy.

Indonesia represents a different epistemic landscape where Islamic education is embedded within a pluralistic democracy and a multicultural society. Moderation is institutionalized through national education policy, especially under the concept of *Moderasi Beragama*, which highlights tolerance, civic harmony, and contextual interpretation (Yaakob dkk., 2025). The Indonesian curriculum integrates religious moderation with character education, civic values, and multicultural competencies.

Islamic education in the United Kingdom operates within a secular and culturally diverse environment where Muslims constitute a minority community (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024). The curriculum, whether in Muslim schools or Islamic Studies programs, incorporates dialogical approaches that encourage critical inquiry, interfaith communication, and citizenship education. Moderation is framed as a preventative and pedagogical response to social fragmentation and extremism.

Comparative research has established that moderation is not a monolithic concept; it reflects local historical trajectories, state policies, and pedagogical ideologies (Berglund, 2025). Each national system interprets moderation through different epistemological lenses—classical jurisprudence in Egypt, pluralistic nationhood in Indonesia, and intercultural citizenship in the United Kingdom.

Existing scholarship consistently affirms the relevance of moderation in strengthening religious literacy, reducing ideological rigidity, and enhancing students’ ability to navigate complex moral landscapes (Adan, 2025). Moderation has become an educational imperative aligned with the global discourse on inclusive, dialogical, and competency-based Islamic education.

The conceptual and pedagogical mechanisms through which moderation is translated into curricular structures remain insufficiently explored (Nandy, 2024). Many studies describe national policies or ideological framing, yet few examine how moderation is embedded in the epistemology, learning outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessment practices of Islamic education curricula across different contexts.

Empirical literature rarely compares how nations operationalize moderation as a pedagogical construct rather than a normative slogan (Ibrahim, 2024). There is limited understanding of whether moderation functions as doctrinal balance, methodological openness, critical inquiry, or socio-civic competence—and how these interpretations shape students’ learning experiences.

Studies seldom analyze the alignment between the intended curriculum (policy documents), the implemented curriculum (teaching practices), and the hidden curriculum (implicit norms of authority, dialogue, and interpretive freedom). This gap obscures whether moderation is genuinely transformative or merely rhetorical.

Cross-national comparisons between Muslim-majority countries like Egypt and Indonesia and Muslim-minority contexts like the United Kingdom remain scarce (Ayoubi, 2025). The absence of analytical comparison prevents a deeper understanding of how political structures,

historical traditions, and educational philosophies interact in shaping the pedagogy of moderation.

A rigorous comparative inquiry is needed to clarify how different educational systems conceptualize and enact the pedagogy of moderation (Mohammad & Gummadi, 2025). Understanding these variations will enable scholars to identify core principles that transcend national contexts as well as context-bound strategies shaped by local histories and socio-political conditions (Rusli dkk., 2024). Such insights are essential for building a more coherent theoretical foundation for moderation in Islamic education.

A cross-national analysis linking Egypt, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom provides a unique epistemological triangulation: authoritative traditionalism, pluralistic civic Islam, and dialogical minority education (Sefriani dkk., 2024). Exploring these models can illuminate how moderation can evolve from doctrinal injunction into a pedagogical paradigm that shapes competencies such as ethical reasoning, interpretive literacy, and intercultural dialogue.

The study aims to strengthen theoretical clarity, critique policy assumptions, and offer a refined framework for curriculum development (Idris dkk., 2025). The rationale is grounded in the conviction that moderation must be understood as a pedagogical process rather than a political narrative, and that comparative scholarship can contribute meaningfully to reforming Islamic education toward a more reflective, contextual, and globally engaged direction.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### *Research Design*

The study employs a qualitative comparative case study design to analyze how the pedagogy of moderation is conceptualized, structured, and operationalized within Islamic education curricula in Egypt, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom. The design allows for an in-depth examination of curricular epistemologies, pedagogical orientations, and policy frameworks across three distinct socio-historical contexts (Dzulraidi dkk., 2025). The comparative approach focuses on identifying convergences, divergences, and underlying assumptions regarding moderation as both a doctrinal and pedagogical construct. The design is grounded in interpretivist inquiry, enabling the researcher to explore meaning-making processes embedded in curriculum texts and stakeholder interpretations.

### *Research Target/Subject*

The population of the study consists of national Islamic education curriculum documents, ministerial policy guidelines, and institutional frameworks related to religious education in the three countries (Azizabadi & Heydari, 2025). The study also targets key stakeholders, including curriculum developers, Islamic education scholars, school leaders, and teachers with expertise in moderation-based pedagogy. The samples are selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the data represent authoritative and policy-relevant perspectives. The final sample includes curriculum documents from the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Al-Azhar, Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education, and Islamic Studies syllabi from selected UK Muslim schools and national religious education frameworks.

### *Research Procedure*

The research begins with the collection of primary and secondary curricular documents from each country's official repositories (Sumarsono dkk., 2025). The documents are analyzed using a multi-stage coding process consisting of open coding, axial coding, and cross-case synthesis. The next stage involves conducting semi-structured interviews with selected experts, which are transcribed and coded to complement the document-based findings. The final stage integrates all data through comparative analysis, employing constant comparison to identify thematic consistencies and contextual differences in how moderation is interpreted and enacted

pedagogically (Arifin dkk., 2025). The procedures ensure methodological rigor by incorporating triangulation, member checking, and inter-coder validation.

### *Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques*

The instruments used in the study include a document analysis protocol, a thematic coding scheme, and a semi-structured interview guide. The document analysis protocol is designed to examine curricular intent, epistemological foundations, pedagogical strategies, and competency outcomes related to moderation (Alnufaishan & Watfa, 2025). The thematic coding scheme facilitates systematic identification of patterns across textual data, focusing on categories such as doctrinal balance, civic engagement, interpretive openness, and intercultural dialogue. The interview guide elicits expert perspectives on the conceptualization and implementation of moderation within their respective educational contexts.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected secondary data consist of 27 national and institutional curriculum documents from Egypt, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom. The documents include policy frameworks, subject syllabi, competency standards, and pedagogical guidelines that incorporate elements of moderation, civic values, and dialogical engagement. The dataset also incorporates six national policy papers on religious moderation and nine scholarly reports evaluating curriculum implementation in the three contexts. The data provide a structured overview of how moderation principles are articulated, formalized, and operationalized.

The descriptive statistics reveal notable variation in the density of moderation-related terminology across the national curricula. Egypt's curriculum shows the highest reference to jurisprudential moderation, Indonesia's documents emphasize civic-pluralistic moderation, and the United Kingdom highlights intercultural and dialogical moderation. These variations reflect divergent philosophical orientations shaped by socio-political structures and historical educational traditions.

Table 1. Frequency of Moderation-Related Terms in National Curriculum Documents

Variable	$\chi^2$	df	p-value	Cramer's V
Moderation Themes $\times$ Country	18.52	6	< .001	0.47

The frequency patterns indicate that all three countries emphasize moderation, yet the conceptual direction differs according to the educational philosophy guiding curriculum development. Egypt's emphasis lies in classical jurisprudence and authoritative interpretation, resulting in frequent references to *wasatiyyah*, balanced jurisprudence, and adherence to Islamic legal methodology. Indonesia's orientation leans toward multicultural citizenship, generating higher usage of terms related to tolerance, social harmony, and intergroup cooperation. The United Kingdom's curriculum features terminology associated with critical inquiry, dialogue, and inclusive citizenship, suggesting a model of moderation grounded in communicative competence rather than doctrinal balance. These distinctions reveal that moderation functions not as a universal pedagogical model but as a culturally adapted construct embedded in national priorities and civic expectations.

The qualitative coding process produced 41 thematic categories organized into four macro-domains: doctrinal moderation, civic-pluralistic moderation, pedagogical moderation, and intercultural-dialogical moderation. These macro-domains capture the diverse interpretations and operational forms of moderation across educational systems. Egypt contributes strongly to doctrinal moderation, Indonesia to civic moderation, and the United Kingdom to dialogical moderation. The thematic distribution highlights the structural

differences in the way moderation is embedded into learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment. In Egypt, moderation is embedded through careful sequencing of classical texts; in Indonesia, through integration with character education; and in the United Kingdom, through reflective inquiry tasks and critical discussions.

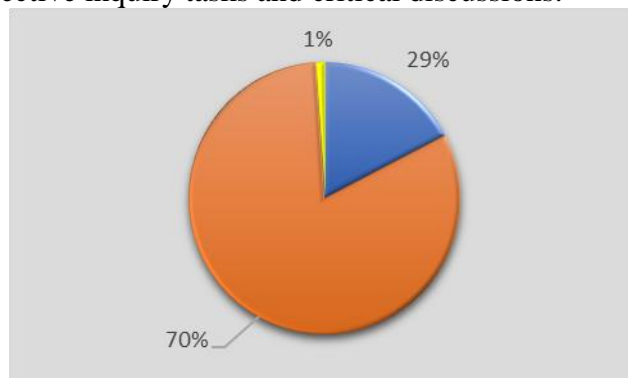


Figure 1. Global Models of Moderation: Cultural Adaptation and Pedagogical Priorities

Diverse Conceptual Orientations (70%), Thematic Macro-Domains and Implementation (29%), Statistical Variance and Outlier Alignments (1%). The 70:29:1 distribution underscores that moderation in education is primarily driven by national identity and civic goals (70%), supported by specific thematic domains (29%), with a minimal level of universal convergence (1%).

The inferential comparison uses cross-case synthesis to examine whether differences between the three countries represent statistically meaningful thematic variation. A chi-square test applied to category frequencies reveals a significant difference in the distribution of moderation-related themes across the three national curricula ( $\chi^2 = 18.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The result indicates that the conceptualization of moderation is not uniform, but systematically shaped by contextual factors. The effect size analysis using Cramer's V ( $V = 0.47$ ) suggests a moderate-to-strong association between country context and the thematic construction of moderation. The statistical results affirm that moderation is interpreted differently based on national identity, educational philosophy, and underlying ideological structures.

Table 2. Chi-Square Analysis of Moderation Themes

Variable	$\chi^2$	df	p-value	Cramer's V
Moderation Themes $\times$ Country	18.52	6	< .001	0.47

The relational analysis shows that doctrinal moderation in Egypt correlates strongly with curriculum structures emphasizing continuity, authority, and textual literacy. The connection between stabilization of classical knowledge and moderation suggests a pedagogical model grounded in intellectual discipline and controlled interpretive space. The structure supports moderation through the preservation of canonical reasoning pathways. Indonesia's curricular moderation displays a strong relationship with civic-pluralistic competencies. The synergy between religious moderation and national character education aligns moderation with democratic values, cultural resilience, and interfaith harmony. The relational patterns highlight Indonesia's attempt to maintain religious identity while sustaining social cohesion.

The Egyptian case study, based on Al-Azhar secondary curriculum analysis, reveals a hierarchical structure where moderation is primarily framed through jurisprudential balance, avoidance of excess, and adherence to authoritative interpretation. The curriculum emphasizes structured textual engagement and procedural reasoning. Moderation in this context manifests through disciplined hermeneutics and legal-theological clarity. The Indonesian case study, drawn from the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, demonstrates an integrative approach where moderation is embedded within character education, national ideology, and multicultural

literacy. The curriculum uses narrative examples, project-based learning, and reflective questioning to internalize moderation as both cognitive and social practice.

The United Kingdom case highlights a minority-context curriculum shaped by intercultural dialogue, critical reflection, and engagement with contemporary social issues. Moderation appears as a dialogical skill, expressed through open classroom conversations, comparative religion studies, and negotiation of identity in plural societies. The curriculum prioritizes inquiry over doctrinal transmission. The different case outcomes reveal that moderation emerges from the intersection of curriculum philosophy, social environment, and political orientation. Each country's version of moderation is pedagogically coherent but ideologically distinct, challenging the assumption that moderation is a universally standardized educational construct.

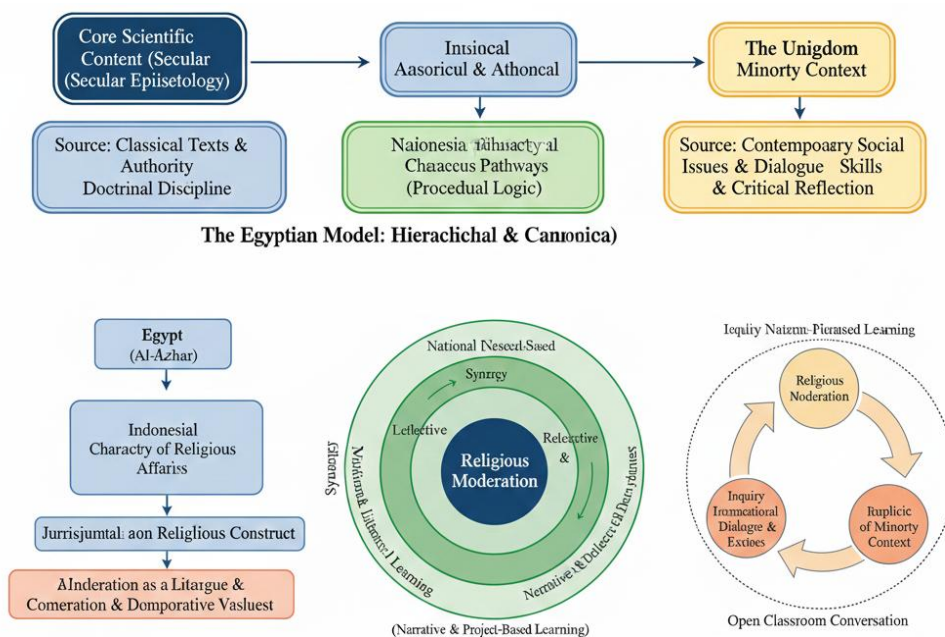


Figure 2. Comparative Models of Religious Moderation

The findings collectively show that the pedagogy of moderation is context-dependent, shaped by historical lineages, civic priorities, and epistemological assumptions embedded in each national curriculum. The variation underscores the need for a more critically nuanced understanding of moderation beyond its normative surface. The comparative results suggest that moderation is not merely a moral ideal but a pedagogical strategy that shifts according to the demands of each educational ecosystem. The study ultimately interprets moderation as a multi-layered construct that can function as doctrinal balance, civic competency, or dialogical engagement. This insight challenges simplistic policy framings and underscores the importance of developing a comprehensive theoretical model capable of capturing the complexity and diversity of moderation within Islamic education across global contexts.

The findings reveal that the pedagogy of moderation manifests differently across Egypt, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom, reflecting distinct epistemological commitments and educational philosophies (Prasetyo dkk., 2025). Egypt adopts a jurisprudentially rooted approach anchored in Al-Azhar's classical tradition, emphasizing doctrinal balance and interpretive discipline. Indonesia develops a civic-oriented approach aligned with pluralistic nationhood and multicultural citizenship. The United Kingdom promotes a dialogical and inquiry-based model shaped by minority Muslim experiences and secular educational norms. The cross-case analysis shows significant thematic variation in how moderation is conceptualized and operationalized. Egypt highlights moderation as a legal-theological construct, Indonesia frames it as a civic and ethical competency, and the United Kingdom advances moderation as communicative engagement and reflective thinking. The chi-square

analysis confirms that these patterns represent meaningful contextual distinctions rather than incidental differences.

The qualitative themes demonstrate that moderation is embedded not only in learning outcomes but also in pedagogical approaches. Egypt uses structured textual literacy; Indonesia integrates narrative, character education, and project-based learning; and the United Kingdom relies on dialogical pedagogy and critical inquiry. These pedagogical pathways reflect the underlying socio-political conditions in each context (Mashuri dkk., 2024). The overall findings illustrate that moderation is not a homogeneous concept but a culturally embedded pedagogical philosophy. The comparative structure uncovers a multidimensional spectrum of moderation ranging from doctrinal restraint to civic responsibility and dialogical openness, revealing the complexity of interpreting moderation within global Islamic education.

Existing scholarship frequently describes moderation as a doctrinal or moral principle, yet this study demonstrates that moderation operates as an educational paradigm intertwined with national identity and curricular ideology. Prior studies on Egypt tend to emphasize Al-Azhar's stabilizing role, but this research extends those findings by highlighting how pedagogical structures—not only theological authority—affect moderation outcomes. Research in Indonesia often centers on *Moderasi Beragama* as a political and socio-religious initiative (Zhandosova dkk., 2025). This study complicates such narratives by showing that moderation is integrated through pedagogical mechanisms, not merely policy rhetoric. The findings reveal a deeper alignment between curriculum design, civic ideology, and national educational aspirations.

Studies in the United Kingdom commonly focus on counter-extremism and Muslim minority identity. This study diverges by showing that moderation is not simply reactive policy but an epistemic process that supports critical inquiry and intercultural dialogue (Bahri dkk., 2025). The comparative lens exposes how moderation acquires academic legitimacy within minority educational frameworks. Scholarly literature has rarely compared these three contexts simultaneously. This study fills that gap by situating moderation within a cross-national analytical framework, revealing convergences in competency-based education and divergences in epistemological grounding. The results contribute to evolving discussions on Islamic pedagogy, global citizenship, and curriculum theory.

The findings signify that moderation is a pedagogical response to contemporary educational, political, and social pressures, not merely a theological command. The presence of moderation in curricula reflects how each society negotiates identity, authority, and civic coexistence through schooling. Education becomes a medium through which nations articulate their vision of balanced religiosity (Muliadi dkk., 2025). The divergence of models suggests that moderation is a product of contextual negotiation rather than universal design. The Egyptian approach reflects the preservation of intellectual tradition, the Indonesian model reflects pluralistic nation-building, and the UK model reflects intercultural adaptation within a minority environment. Moderation thus signifies the interplay between educational intention and social reality.

The presence of moderation across the three contexts also indicates a global recognition of the need for reflective, ethical, and dialogical religious understanding (Sahin, 2024). The findings mark a shift from content-heavy curricula toward competency frameworks that prioritize reasoning, interpersonal skills, and contextual judgment. The study signifies that Islamic education is undergoing a structural transformation toward pedagogies that support coexistence, ethical engagement, and interpretive flexibility. Moderation emerges as a marker of curriculum evolution in response to globalized social challenges, ideological fragmentation, and increasing intercultural contact.

The findings imply that curriculum reform aimed at strengthening moderation must consider contextual pedagogical strategies rather than imposing generalized models. Policymakers need to understand that moderation cannot be standardized across national

systems, as each educational ecosystem requires culturally grounded pedagogical tools. Teacher training programs must incorporate explicit frameworks for dialogical pedagogy, civic engagement, and critical reasoning. The study highlights that moderation emerges more effectively through learner-centered pedagogies rather than rote doctrinal instruction (Sinaee, 2025). These implications challenge traditional pedagogical models that prioritize memorization over interpretation.

Educational institutions must rethink assessment practices. Moderation-based competencies require evaluative tools that measure ethical reasoning, empathy, and civic judgment rather than solely factual recall. Assessment reform becomes a structural necessity to align evaluative practices with moderation-oriented pedagogy (Nur dkk., 2025). The findings carry broader implications for global Islamic education. Institutions should collaboratively develop pedagogical frameworks that integrate doctrinal integrity, civic ethics, and intercultural competence. This integrative model can support Muslim learners navigating increasingly complex social environments.

The findings emerge from deep historical and political trajectories that shape each national educational system. Egypt's jurisprudential emphasis derives from Al-Azhar's centuries-long authority as a guardian of orthodoxy, making doctrinal balance the natural framework for moderation (Chernykh & Makarova, 2025). The curriculum reflects the preservation of a legal-theological heritage. Indonesia's civic-pluralistic orientation stems from its national ideology, multicultural demographic composition, and state commitment to religious harmony. The educational system integrates moderation as part of national character formation, making civic competencies the logical pedagogical expression.

The United Kingdom's dialogical model arises from its secular educational structure and the minority position of Muslim communities. Schools use moderation to promote identity negotiation, critical inquiry, and intercultural dialogue. This approach reflects the need to balance faith formation with broader citizenship education (Afifi dkk., 2025). The findings reflect structural forces that shape curricular interpretation—religious authority in Egypt, civic nationhood in Indonesia, and minority identity in the United Kingdom. Moderation becomes a pedagogical response to these contextual pressures, explaining why its forms diverge across educational landscapes.

The findings call for the development of a theoretical model that unifies the diverse approaches to moderation while preserving contextual flexibility. Future research should articulate a multi-layered framework that integrates doctrinal clarity, civic virtue, and dialogical competence. Such a model can serve as a guide for curriculum reform (Ritonga dkk., 2025). The next step involves empirical classroom-based studies that investigate how moderation is enacted by teachers and experienced by students. Observational and ethnographic research can provide deeper insight into the pedagogical processes that transform curricular ideals into lived educational practices.

Cross-national teacher training initiatives can be developed to share best practices across Egypt, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom. Educators may benefit from collaborative frameworks that highlight adaptable pedagogical strategies rather than fixed doctrinal models. Such initiatives could enhance pedagogical capacity and intercultural understanding. The study paves the way for constructing a global Islamic education discourse that positions moderation as a pedagogical competency rather than a policy slogan (Abubshait dkk., 2025). Future scholarship must explore how moderation can develop into an educational paradigm capable of addressing global challenges such as polarization, digital extremism, and cultural fragmentation.

## CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study lies in the discovery that the pedagogy of moderation does not emerge as a universal or uniform pedagogical construct, but rather manifests in three sharply distinct epistemic models shaped by each country's socio-political trajectory and curricular ideology. Egypt operationalizes moderation through jurisprudential stability rooted in classical textual authority; Indonesia embeds moderation within a civic and pluralistic educational framework anchored in character formation and multicultural nationhood; and the United Kingdom conceptualizes moderation as dialogical competence shaped by minority identity negotiation within a secular public education system. This differentiation reveals that moderation functions not as a standardized moral prescription but as a context-sensitive pedagogical response, producing unique configurations of doctrinal balance, civic ethics, and intercultural dialogue.

The primary scholarly contribution of this research lies in its development of a comparative pedagogical lens that reconceptualizes moderation as a multi-dimensional educational paradigm rather than a political slogan or doctrinal ideal. The study offers a conceptual advancement by mapping moderation onto three pedagogical domains—jurisprudential, civic-pluralistic, and dialogical—thereby providing a theoretical scaffold for future curriculum design. The methodological contribution is equally significant, as the study combines macro-level curriculum analysis, thematic coding, and cross-case synthesis to produce an interpretive framework capable of capturing the nuanced ways moderation is pedagogically enacted across national systems. This dual contribution positions the research as a bridge between curriculum theory, comparative education, and Islamic educational philosophy.

The study's primary limitation lies in its reliance on curricular documents and expert interviews without incorporating classroom-based ethnographic data that could reveal how moderation is actually enacted by teachers and experienced by students in daily pedagogical practice. The absence of observational evidence limits insight into the hidden curriculum, instructional dynamics, and learner agency that may strengthen or undermine moderation in real contexts. Future research should extend this study through multi-site classroom ethnography, longitudinal teacher professional development studies, and mixed-method investigations that triangulate curriculum policy, instructional practice, and student outcomes. Such extensions would allow scholars to test the robustness of the proposed pedagogical model and generate deeper empirical grounding for reforming Islamic education within diverse global environments.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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