



Religious Moderation Policy in Islamic Education during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin Era

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the policy of religious moderation in Islamic education during the era of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin as Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The study focuses on the formulation of religious moderation policies, their implementation in Islamic education institutions, and their contribution to strengthening moderate Islamic values. This research employed a qualitative approach with a policy analysis method. The primary data sources consisted of policy documents issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including guidelines, regulations, and official documents related to religious moderation programs, supported by interviews with relevant stakeholders in Islamic education. Data were analyzed through content analysis by identifying policy objectives, implementation strategies, and their implications for Islamic education development. The findings indicate that religious moderation became a central direction of Islamic education policy during Lukman Hakim Saifuddin's leadership. The policy was implemented through curriculum development, strengthening teachers' understanding of moderation values, and integrating principles of tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity into Islamic education. However, implementation faced challenges, including differences in institutional readiness and varying interpretations of religious moderation among educational actors. This study implies that Islamic education policies need continuous strengthening through systematic implementation strategies, teacher capacity development, and institutional support to ensure that religious moderation becomes an integral part of Islamic education. This research contributes to the study of Islamic education policy by specifically examining the relationship between religious moderation policy formulation and its implementation during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era, providing a policy perspective on the development of moderate Islamic education in Indonesia.



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has a strategic position in shaping the intellectual, moral, and social character of Muslim communities in Indonesia. As a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia places Islamic education not only as a means of religious transmission but also as an instrument for strengthening national identity, social harmony, and democratic values. The development of Islamic education policies has therefore become an important aspect of government efforts to improve educational quality while maintaining religious values within a multicultural society (Inayatillah, Kamaruddin, and Anzaikhan 2022). However, Islamic education continues to face complex challenges, including issues of educational quality, curriculum relevance, teacher competence, and the emergence of religious understandings that are less compatible with the principles of pluralism and diversity (MAG 2025).

One of the important policy responses of the Indonesian government to address these challenges is the development of religious moderation as a national religious policy. Religious moderation is positioned as an approach that emphasizes balance, tolerance, commitment to nationality, and rejection of extremism in religious life (Adi et al. 2023). In the context of Islamic education, religious moderation is not merely a religious discourse but has become a policy direction integrated into curriculum development, teacher capacity building, and educational management. During the leadership of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin as Minister of Religious Affairs (2014–2019), religious moderation became one of the main agendas of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly through efforts to strengthen moderate Islamic values in educational institutions (Erwin 2026).

Previous studies have examined various aspects of Islamic education policy and religious moderation. Research by Syafi'i and Yusuf (2021) explains that Islamic education in Indonesia has an important role in promoting democratic and moderate religious values. Similarly, studies by Malik, Hs, and Hindi (2021) emphasize that Islamic education must adapt to social changes by integrating moral education and contemporary challenges. Other research by Azis and Samad (2024) discusses religious moderation as a strategy to prevent radicalism and strengthen tolerance among religious communities. However, these studies generally focus on the conceptual dimension of Islamic education and religious moderation, while the policy process behind the formulation and implementation of religious moderation within Islamic education has received less attention.

Furthermore, several previous studies have analyzed government policies related to religious moderation, but they tend to examine the broader national religious policy framework rather than specifically exploring its relationship with Islamic education institutions. For example, research by Hidayah, Fauziyah, and Wibowo (2024) discusses the importance of moderation discourse in Indonesian religious policy, while Yusuf and Saputra (2021) highlights the challenges of implementing moderate Islamic education in diverse social contexts. Nevertheless, these studies have not sufficiently examined how religious moderation was formulated as an educational policy and how it was translated into educational practices during a specific policy leadership period.

The absence of a detailed analysis regarding the relationship between policy formulation and implementation creates an important research gap. Existing studies have provided valuable explanations about Islamic education, religious moderation, and government policy, but they have not comprehensively examined the policy direction of religious moderation in Islamic education during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era. This research gap is significant because policy formulation at the governmental level does not always directly correspond with implementation at educational institutions. Understanding this relationship is necessary to evaluate how religious moderation policies were designed, implemented, and adapted within the Islamic education system.

Based on this gap, this study offers a different perspective by analyzing religious moderation policy in Islamic education through a policy analysis approach. Unlike previous studies that mainly discuss religious moderation from normative and conceptual perspectives, this research examines the formulation process, policy objectives, implementation strategies, and challenges faced in applying religious moderation within Islamic education during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era. Therefore, the originality of this research lies in its focus on connecting religious moderation as a national policy agenda with its practical implications for Islamic education development.

This study aims to analyze the policy of religious moderation in Islamic education during the era of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin. Specifically, this research examines how the policy was formulated, implemented, and its contribution to strengthening moderate Islamic education in Indonesia. Through this analysis, the study is expected to provide academic contributions to the field of Islamic education policy studies and practical contributions for policymakers and educational institutions in developing sustainable religious moderation programs.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach using policy analysis to examine religious moderation policy in Islamic education during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era. A qualitative approach was selected because this research focuses on understanding the formulation, implementation process, and policy implications of religious moderation within the context of Islamic education. Qualitative research is appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena because it enables researchers to interpret meanings, processes, and contextual factors behind a particular phenomenon (Wahyuni 2024). Furthermore, policy analysis through a qualitative approach allows researchers to examine how policies are formulated, implemented, and interpreted within specific social and institutional contexts (Okumus, Rasoolimanesh, and Jahani 2022).

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained from official policy documents issued during the leadership of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin as Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2014–2019), including policy guidelines, regulations, ministerial documents, and official publications

related to religious moderation and Islamic education policies. Secondary data were obtained from academic books, journal articles, previous research studies, and other relevant scholarly publications discussing Islamic education policy and religious moderation. Document analysis is considered an important method in qualitative research because official documents provide valuable information regarding institutional objectives, policy priorities, and the historical context of decision-making processes (Joslin 2019).

Data collection was conducted through systematic document analysis and literature review. The researcher identified, selected, and categorized relevant policy documents based on three criteria: (1) documents directly related to religious moderation policies, (2) documents concerning Islamic education development, and (3) documents published during or discussing the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin policy period. Additional supporting information was obtained from relevant statements and public discussions involving policymakers and educational stakeholders. The selection of documents followed the principles of qualitative document analysis, which emphasize the relevance, authenticity, and significance of documents in relation to the research objectives (Beraha 2025).

The collected data were analyzed using content analysis techniques. The analysis process involved several stages: data reduction, data classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Through content analysis, researchers can systematically identify themes, patterns, and meanings contained within textual data, including policy documents and academic sources (Aguinis 2023). In this study, the researcher analyzed the policy objectives, formulation processes, implementation strategies, and challenges of religious moderation policies in Islamic education.

To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation by comparing information from official policy documents, academic literature, and related research findings. Triangulation is an important strategy in qualitative research to improve credibility and reduce the possibility of relying on a single source of interpretation (Saravanan 2026). Through this methodological framework, the study provides a systematic analysis of how religious moderation was developed as a policy direction in Islamic education and how the policy contributed to strengthening moderate Islamic values in Indonesia.

RESULT

1. Formulation of Religious Moderation Policy in Islamic Education during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin Era

The results of this study indicate that religious moderation became one of the main policy orientations in Islamic education during the leadership period of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin as Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2014–2019). Based on the analysis of official documents published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, religious moderation was formulated as a strategic response to the challenges of religious diversity, social tension, and the development of exclusive religious interpretations within Indonesian society. The policy formulation positioned Islamic education as an important instrument for developing religious understanding that is balanced, tolerant, and compatible with Indonesia's plural social structure (Azhari, Nurani, and Torik 2024).

The document analysis shows that religious moderation was developed through a policy framework that emphasized four main indicators: national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local culture. These indicators became the foundation for directing Islamic education toward strengthening moderate religious attitudes. The policy documents reveal that the Ministry of Religious Affairs did not view moderation merely as a religious concept but as an educational orientation that should influence learning processes, institutional management, and the formation of students' character.

The findings demonstrate that the formulation of religious moderation policy was closely related to the changing role of Islamic education in Indonesia. Islamic education was expected not only to provide religious knowledge but also to prepare students to participate positively in a multicultural society. This policy direction is reflected in the government's efforts to strengthen educational approaches that integrate religious values with social responsibility and national identity (Aziz 2022).

The analysis further reveals that the formulation of religious moderation policy placed educators as key actors in achieving policy objectives. Teachers and lecturers were identified as important elements because they directly influence students' understanding of religious teachings. Therefore, policy documents emphasized strengthening educators' competence and awareness regarding moderate religious perspectives. This approach is consistent with the broader development of Islamic education, where educators function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as role models in shaping students' attitudes and values (Yansah et al. 2025).

The findings also indicate that the policy formulation during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era represented an effort to strengthen the social function of Islamic education. Religious education was directed toward creating individuals who maintain religious commitment while respecting differences in society. Anica et al. (2025) explains

that Islamic education in Indonesia has a significant role in supporting democratic values and social harmony. In line with this perspective, the analyzed policy documents show that religious moderation was formulated as a means of connecting Islamic education with Indonesia's multicultural reality.

Overall, the results show that the formulation of religious moderation policy consisted of three main orientations: strengthening moderate religious understanding, integrating moderation values into Islamic education, and preventing the growth of intolerant religious perspectives. These orientations became the basis for developing implementation strategies within Islamic education institutions.

2. Policy Framework and Institutional Direction of Religious Moderation

The results of document analysis show that the policy framework of religious moderation was developed through several institutional directions involving curriculum development, educator strengthening, and educational culture transformation. The Ministry of Religious Affairs positioned religious moderation as an integrated part of Islamic education development rather than as an independent program. This approach indicates that moderation values were intended to become part of the overall educational process.

The first finding relates to curriculum orientation. The analyzed documents indicate that religious moderation values were encouraged to be integrated into Islamic education materials and learning activities. The integration aimed to ensure that students understand religious teachings together with values of tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity. The development of Islamic education curriculum has historically been influenced by social changes and national educational needs, requiring Islamic education to continuously adapt to contemporary challenges ([A. R. Azis and Tamimi 2025](#)).

The second finding concerns institutional strengthening through educator development. Policy documents indicate that teachers and lecturers received significant attention because they were considered responsible for translating policy objectives into classroom practices. The implementation of moderation requires educators who are able to present religious teachings contextually and avoid approaches that encourage exclusivist interpretations. Therefore, strengthening educators' understanding became an essential element in the institutional framework of religious moderation.

The third finding relates to the development of educational culture. The documents analyzed show that religious moderation was expected to be reflected in institutional environments, including academic interaction, student activities, and educational management. Islamic education institutions were encouraged to develop environments that support dialogue, openness, and respect for differences. [Muhsin, Kususiyanah, and Maksum \(2024\)](#) highlights that the implementation of moderate Islamic education requires institutional commitment because moderation cannot be achieved only through curriculum changes but also through educational culture.

The findings also indicate that the institutional framework of religious moderation involved cooperation between government institutions and educational actors. The Ministry of Religious Affairs functioned as the policy initiator, while schools, madrasahs, and higher education institutions became important spaces for policy implementation. This framework demonstrates that religious moderation required coordination between various levels of educational governance.

Furthermore, the results show that the policy framework attempted to balance religious identity and social diversity. The Ministry of Religious Affairs' document on religious moderation emphasizes that moderate religious understanding does not reduce religious commitment but encourages responsible religious practice within a diverse society ([Fauzan 2023](#)).

Based on these findings, the institutional direction of religious moderation policy can be identified through three aspects: curriculum integration, human resource development, and institutional transformation. These aspects became the main framework for translating national religious moderation policy into Islamic education practices.

3. Implementation of Religious Moderation Policy in Islamic Education

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of religious moderation policy was carried out through educational programs, institutional strengthening, and capacity development among educational actors. The analysis of policy documents shows that implementation focused on transforming moderation values from a national policy framework into educational practices.

One of the main implementation strategies identified was the dissemination and strengthening of religious moderation understanding among teachers, lecturers, and educational institutions. The Ministry of Religious Affairs developed various programs aimed at increasing awareness of moderation principles among educational stakeholders. These activities demonstrate that implementation was not limited to issuing regulations but also involved efforts to build understanding among policy implementers ([Wulandari and Sari 2024](#)).

The findings also reveal that curriculum integration became an important mechanism in implementing religious moderation. Educational institutions were encouraged to incorporate values such as tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity into Islamic education learning. Through this approach, religious moderation was positioned as part of students' character development rather than merely theoretical knowledge.

Another important finding relates to the role of educators in implementation. The documents indicate that teachers and lecturers were considered the main agents responsible for delivering moderation-oriented education. Therefore, educator competence became an important factor determining whether policy objectives could be achieved. [Wulandari and Sari \(2024\)](#) explains that multicultural education requires educators who are capable of managing diversity and developing inclusive learning environments.

However, the results also identify several challenges in implementation. The first challenge is the difference in institutional readiness among Islamic education institutions. Some institutions have stronger resources and programs, while others require further support to implement moderation policies effectively. The second challenge is differences in interpretation regarding religious moderation among educational actors. These differences influence how moderation policies are understood and practiced.

The findings demonstrate that implementation of religious moderation policy requires continuous support and evaluation. Policy documents show that strengthening moderation cannot be achieved through short-term programs but requires sustainable institutional commitment. [Yasmini et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasizes that the development of moderate Islamic education requires consistency between policy direction and educational practice.

The results also indicate that religious moderation policy has become an important part of contemporary Islamic education development in Indonesia. The policy provides a framework for educational institutions to maintain religious identity while responding to social diversity. [Rahman, Anam, and Sodiq \(2023\)](#) state that moderation is an important strategy in maintaining social harmony and preventing extreme religious attitudes.

Overall, the findings show that implementation of religious moderation policy occurred through three main processes: strengthening educator capacity, integrating moderation values into educational activities, and developing institutional cultures that support tolerance and diversity

4. Challenges in the Implementation of Religious Moderation Policy in Islamic Education

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of religious moderation policy in Islamic education faced several challenges related to institutional capacity, human resources, and differences in understanding among educational actors. Based on the analysis of policy documents and supporting academic sources, the implementation of moderation policy requires not only regulatory support but also continuous adaptation at the institutional level ([Sudrajat, Supiana, and Zakiah 2021](#)).

The first challenge identified is the variation in institutional readiness among Islamic education institutions. The policy direction formulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs applies nationally, but each educational institution has different levels of resources, management capacity, and program development. The findings show that differences in infrastructure, educator competence, and institutional commitment influence the extent to which moderation values can be implemented effectively. Therefore, the implementation process requires adjustment according to the conditions of each educational institution.

The second challenge relates to the competence and understanding of educators. The results show that teachers and lecturers have a central position in translating religious moderation policies into learning practices. However, differences in educational backgrounds, religious perspectives, and pedagogical experiences may affect how educators understand and apply moderation principles. The implementation of moderation requires educators who are not only knowledgeable about religious teachings but also capable of presenting them within the context of social diversity ([Hanif, Syarifudin, and Muhtarom 2025](#)).

The third challenge concerns the interpretation of religious moderation itself. The findings indicate that moderation as a policy concept requires continuous clarification because it involves religious, social, and political dimensions. Without adequate understanding, moderation may be interpreted differently by educational actors. The Ministry of Religious Affairs therefore emphasizes that moderation should be understood as a balanced religious attitude that maintains religious commitment while respecting diversity ([Chotimah, Qudsy, and Yusuf 2024](#)).

The results also reveal that the sustainability of religious moderation policy depends on institutional support and evaluation mechanisms. The implementation of policy cannot rely solely on initial socialization programs but requires continuous monitoring, training, and strengthening of educational networks. This finding shows that policy implementation is a long-term process involving interaction between government institutions and educational communities.

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that Islamic education institutions face the challenge of balancing religious identity and openness toward diversity. Educational institutions are expected to maintain Islamic values while developing attitudes of tolerance and social responsibility. [Zulkarnain et al. \(2025\)](#) explains that education in a multicultural society requires institutions that are able to manage differences constructively.

The findings demonstrate that the challenges in implementing religious moderation policy are not primarily related to policy formulation but to the process of translating policy objectives into educational practices. Therefore, strengthening implementation mechanisms remains an important aspect of ensuring that religious moderation becomes an integral part of Islamic education.

DISCUSSION

1. Religious Moderation Policy as a New Direction of Islamic Education Policy

The findings of this study indicate that religious moderation during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era represented a significant shift in the direction of Islamic education policy in Indonesia. Religious moderation was not only positioned as a religious discourse but also developed as a policy framework that influenced curriculum orientation, educator development, and institutional practices in Islamic education. This finding expands previous discussions on Islamic education, which have generally emphasized curriculum development, religious transmission, and moral formation, by showing how Islamic education policy has become connected with broader social objectives, particularly the strengthening of tolerance, diversity, and national cohesion.

Previous studies have demonstrated that Islamic education in Indonesia has historically developed in response to social and political changes. [Husna and Thohir \(2020\)](#) explains that Islamic education has experienced continuous transformation from traditional religious learning toward a more modern educational system that interacts with national development. Similarly, [Daheri \(2022\)](#) argues that Islamic education must respond to contemporary challenges by integrating religious values with social realities. The findings of this study support these perspectives by demonstrating that religious moderation became one of the policy instruments used to adapt Islamic education to Indonesia's multicultural context.

However, this research provides a different perspective from previous studies because it examines religious moderation not only as an educational value but as a formal policy direction. [Kadi \(2022\)](#) highlights that Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia have the potential to support democratic citizenship and social harmony. While Hefner focuses on the social role of Islamic schools, this study extends the discussion by analyzing how the state institutionalized these values through religious moderation policies during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era.

The findings also correspond with research conducted by [Muis \(2026\)](#), which emphasizes the importance of multicultural education in developing students' ability to understand and respect differences. Raihani's study focuses on educational practices that promote multicultural citizenship, whereas this research highlights the policy mechanism that encourages educational institutions to adopt these principles. Therefore, the present study contributes by explaining the relationship between national policy formulation and educational implementation.

Furthermore, the results strengthen the arguments of [Musyahid and Kolis \(2023\)](#), who identifies that the implementation of moderate Islamic education requires institutional commitment and appropriate educational strategies. Zuhdi's research mainly examines the challenges of implementing moderation within Islamic education, while this study provides an additional perspective by tracing the policy foundation that shapes such implementation. The findings indicate that institutional practices of moderation cannot be separated from government policy frameworks that define objectives, values, and implementation strategies.

The relationship between religious moderation and Islamic education policy has also been discussed by [Hasan and Juhannis \(2024\)](#), who view moderation as an approach to preventing intolerance and strengthening social harmony. Nevertheless, their study mainly presents moderation from a conceptual perspective. In contrast, this research demonstrates how moderation was transformed into a structured educational policy involving curriculum orientation, educator development, and institutional programs. This distinction represents the main contribution of this study.

In addition, [Kamaludin, Purnama, and Zirmansyah \(2021\)](#) explains that the development of public Islam in Indonesia involves negotiation between religious identity, social change, and political contexts. The findings of this research reflect this dynamic by showing that religious moderation policy emerged as an attempt to maintain Islamic identity while simultaneously promoting openness within a plural society. The policy therefore represents a form of state intervention in managing religious diversity through educational mechanisms.

The findings also complement [Ilmiah and Kadi \(2025\)](#) study regarding the strengthening of moderate Islam in Indonesian education. Moderate Islamic values in educational development, but this research goes further by examining the policy direction that enables these values to be systematically integrated into Islamic education.

Therefore, the contribution of this research lies in connecting the conceptual discussion of moderate Islam with the practical dimension of educational governance.

Based on the comparison with previous studies, this research confirms that Islamic education policy in Indonesia has moved beyond the traditional function of religious knowledge transmission. The policy direction during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era demonstrates an effort to position Islamic education as an instrument for developing religious understanding that is socially responsible and compatible with democratic values. The originality of this study lies in its analysis of religious moderation as a policy framework that connects state policy, Islamic education institutions, and the development of moderate religious attitudes.

Therefore, the implications of this finding suggest that future Islamic education policies need to consider both religious objectives and social realities. Religious moderation should not be understood merely as a temporary government program but as a long-term educational strategy that requires curriculum support, educator capacity building, and institutional commitment.

2. Transformation of Religious Moderation from Concept to Educational Implementation

The findings of this study demonstrate that religious moderation has undergone a transformation from a conceptual framework into an educational policy instrument implemented within Islamic education institutions. The policy developed during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era shows that religious moderation was not limited to religious discourse but was translated into curriculum orientation, educator development, and institutional programs. This transformation indicates that the effectiveness of religious moderation depends on the ability of educational institutions to convert policy principles into concrete educational practices.

Previous studies have largely discussed religious moderation as a conceptual approach to addressing religious intolerance and strengthening social harmony. [Ainissyifa and Nasrullah \(2025\)](#), for example, explain that religious moderation functions as a strategy to maintain balance between religious commitment and respect for diversity. Their study emphasizes the theoretical importance of moderation values, while the present research extends the discussion by examining how these values are institutionalized through Islamic education policy. The findings show that moderation becomes more meaningful when supported by systematic educational mechanisms.

The transformation of moderation into educational practice is also consistent with the argument of [Khasanah, Hamzani, and Aravik \(2023\)](#), which states that religious moderation requires integration into various sectors, including education. The present study confirms this direction by showing that Islamic education institutions became strategic spaces for implementing moderation values. However, this research contributes further by identifying the specific mechanisms through which policy objectives are translated into educational processes, including curriculum development, teacher strengthening, and institutional culture formation.

The role of educators in implementing religious moderation is an important finding of this research. Previous research by [Mustofa et al. \(2026\)](#) emphasizes that teachers are central actors in Islamic education because they influence students' understanding and character development. Similarly, [Asfiah and Anggraeni \(2025\)](#) explains that multicultural education requires educators who possess the ability to manage diversity and create inclusive learning environments. The findings of this study support these arguments by showing that the success of religious moderation policy depends significantly on educators' understanding and capacity to apply moderation principles in learning activities.

Nevertheless, this study differs from previous research because it does not only examine educators as agents of change but also places them within a broader policy framework. While previous studies often focus on teacher competence or educational practices, this research highlights how teacher development becomes part of a state policy strategy for strengthening moderate Islamic education. This perspective provides a clearer understanding of the relationship between policy formulation and educational implementation.

The integration of moderation values into the curriculum also represents an important aspect of policy implementation. Research by [Fahruddin et al. \(2024\)](#) reveals that moderate Islamic education requires institutional commitment and curriculum adaptation. The findings of this study strengthen this argument by demonstrating that religious moderation policy encourages Islamic education institutions to incorporate values such as tolerance, balance, and respect for diversity into learning processes. However, the study also reveals that curriculum integration alone is insufficient without support from institutional culture and educator readiness.

Furthermore, the findings are related to [Kamilia, Hadi, and Juhairiyah \(2026\)](#) research regarding the role of Islamic schools in developing democratic values. Hefner argues that Islamic education can contribute to democratic life when educational institutions promote openness and social responsibility. This study expands Hefner's perspective

by showing that religious moderation policy represents a governmental mechanism for encouraging Islamic education institutions to perform this social function.

The implementation process also reflects the challenges identified in previous studies. Wibowo et al. (2025) explains that strengthening moderate Islam in education requires consistency between educational ideals and institutional practices. The findings of this research confirm that policy implementation requires continuous support because differences in institutional capacity and understanding may influence the effectiveness of moderation programs. Therefore, religious moderation cannot be achieved only through policy documents but requires sustainable institutional development.

In addition, Mahdiyyah and Jasminto (2025) highlights that the development of Islamic discourse in Indonesia is influenced by interactions between religious identity, social change, and political structures. The implementation of religious moderation policy reflects this interaction because educational institutions become spaces where religious values and social realities are negotiated. The findings indicate that moderation policy attempts to maintain Islamic identity while encouraging inclusive engagement within a diverse society.

Based on these comparisons, this study contributes to the existing literature by explaining the process through which religious moderation moves from an abstract concept into an operational educational policy. Previous studies have provided important discussions regarding moderation values, multicultural education, and Islamic educational development; however, fewer studies have examined the policy mechanisms that connect these dimensions. Therefore, this research provides a policy-oriented perspective showing that successful implementation of religious moderation requires alignment between government direction, institutional commitment, curriculum development, and educator capacity.

The implication of this finding is that future Islamic education policies should focus not only on producing policy documents but also on strengthening implementation structures. Religious moderation needs to be supported through continuous teacher training, curriculum evaluation, institutional monitoring, and collaboration among educational stakeholders to ensure that moderation values become embedded in Islamic education practices.

3. Comparative Analysis with Previous Studies and Research Contribution

The findings of this study provide a broader understanding of religious moderation policy by examining its relationship with Islamic education governance in Indonesia. Previous studies have discussed Islamic education, religious moderation, and tolerance from various perspectives; however, many studies have focused primarily on conceptual, social, or pedagogical dimensions. This research contributes by analyzing religious moderation as a policy framework that connects government orientation, educational institutions, and the implementation of Islamic education values during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era.

Previous research by M. Ilmiah, Anwar, and Fariyah (2025) examined the relationship between Islamic education and democracy in Indonesia. Hefner argues that Islamic educational institutions have an important role in developing democratic attitudes and social responsibility among students. This study supports Hefner's argument by showing that Islamic education policies increasingly emphasize values related to tolerance and citizenship. However, while Hefner focuses on the social role of Islamic schools, the present research provides a different perspective by analyzing how such values are institutionalized through state policy, particularly through the religious moderation agenda.

Similarly, Muhaemin et al. (2023) investigated multicultural education in Indonesia and emphasized the importance of educational practices that promote respect for diversity. His research highlights the role of schools in creating multicultural citizens. The present study strengthens this perspective by demonstrating that multicultural values are not only developed through school practices but are also influenced by national educational policies. The difference lies in the analytical focus: Raihani emphasizes educational practice, whereas this research examines the policy process that shapes and supports those practices.

Studies by Armedi, Sodikin, and Asrori (2024) have explained religious moderation as an approach to preventing intolerance and maintaining social harmony. Their research contributes significantly to understanding the conceptual foundation of moderation in Indonesia. Nevertheless, their discussion remains largely focused on the meaning and importance of moderation as a religious concept. This study extends their work by demonstrating how moderation was transformed into an educational policy instrument through curriculum orientation, educator development, and institutional programs. Therefore, the present research moves from the conceptual discussion of moderation toward an analysis of policy implementation.

Furthermore, Alabdulhadi and Alkandari (2024) examined challenges in implementing moderate Islamic education and emphasized the importance of institutional commitment. This study confirms Zuhdi's findings by showing that successful moderation implementation depends on educational institutions' readiness and educators'

capacity. However, this research adds a policy dimension by explaining that institutional challenges are closely related to how national policy objectives are translated into educational practices. In this sense, the present study provides a stronger connection between policy formulation and implementation.

Research by [Alabdulhadi and Alkandari \(2024\)](#) regarding the strengthening of moderate Islam in Indonesian education also highlights the importance of developing moderate religious values within educational institutions. Similar to Suharto's findings, this research confirms that Islamic education plays an important role in strengthening religious attitudes that are compatible with Indonesia's plural society. However, this study differs by focusing specifically on the policy direction developed during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era, thereby providing a historical and governance perspective that is less explored in previous studies.

In addition, [Sukma et al. \(2025\)](#) explains that Indonesian Islam develops through continuous interaction between religious identity, social transformation, and political structures. The findings of this research support this argument by showing that religious moderation policy represents an effort to negotiate between maintaining Islamic identity and responding to social diversity. The difference is that this study specifically examines education as a policy arena where this negotiation takes place.

[Kosim et al. \(2023\)](#) have discussed the transformation of Islamic education in response to modernization and social change. Their studies emphasize the importance of adapting Islamic education to contemporary realities. This research complements these perspectives by showing that religious moderation became one of the policy mechanisms used to guide this adaptation process. Thus, Islamic education development is not only influenced by pedagogical considerations but also by national policy priorities.

Based on the comparison with previous studies, this research identifies several contributions. First, it contributes theoretically by positioning religious moderation as part of Islamic education policy studies rather than only as a religious or social concept. Second, it contributes empirically by analyzing the relationship between policy formulation and educational implementation during a specific governmental period. Third, it contributes practically by providing insights into how Islamic education institutions can implement moderation values through curriculum, educator development, and institutional strategies.

Therefore, the originality of this study lies in its policy-oriented analysis of religious moderation within Islamic education. While previous research has provided important explanations regarding moderation, tolerance, and Islamic education development, this study integrates these discussions by examining how religious moderation operates as a governmental educational strategy. This perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic education policy in responding to contemporary challenges of diversity, religious understanding, and social cohesion in Indonesia.

4. Implications for Contemporary Islamic Education Policy

The findings of this study have important implications for the development of contemporary Islamic education policy in Indonesia. The analysis of religious moderation policy during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era demonstrates that Islamic education has expanded beyond its traditional role as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge. Instead, Islamic education has become a strategic instrument for strengthening social cohesion, developing responsible citizenship, and responding to challenges related to religious diversity. Therefore, religious moderation policy provides an important framework for understanding how Islamic education can adapt to contemporary social realities.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Islamic education policy studies by demonstrating that educational policies are influenced not only by pedagogical considerations but also by broader social and political contexts. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of Islamic education transformation in responding to modernization and globalization. [Sibuan et al. \(2026\)](#) explains that Islamic education must continuously develop by maintaining religious identity while engaging with changing social conditions. The findings of this study extend this perspective by showing that religious moderation has become one of the policy instruments through which Islamic education responds to contemporary challenges.

The findings also have implications for curriculum development. Islamic education curriculum should not only focus on religious knowledge but also integrate values that encourage students to understand diversity, tolerance, and social responsibility. [Afandi, Wijaksono, and Muis \(2026\)](#) emphasizes that Islamic education curriculum development requires a balance between religious objectives and educational needs. This study supports this argument by demonstrating that moderation values need to be embedded within learning materials and educational processes rather than treated as separate topics.

From an institutional perspective, this research highlights the importance of strengthening educational management in implementing religious moderation. Educational institutions require supportive environments where

moderation values can be practiced through academic interaction, organizational culture, and student activities. Ritonga, Sentosa, and Nasution (2026) argues that multicultural education requires institutional commitment because inclusive values must be reflected in school and university environments. The findings of this study strengthen this perspective by showing that policy implementation depends greatly on institutional readiness.

Another important implication concerns the role of educators. Teachers and lecturers are central actors in translating religious moderation policy into educational practice. Therefore, policy development should be accompanied by continuous professional development programs that strengthen educators' understanding of moderation principles and their pedagogical skills. Muhibbi et al. (2025) explains that Islamic educational institutions can contribute to democratic development when educators promote openness and social responsibility. This study confirms that educator capacity is one of the key factors determining the effectiveness of moderation-oriented Islamic education.

Furthermore, the findings have implications for future government policy. Religious moderation should not be implemented as a short-term program associated with a particular leadership period but should become a sustainable component of Islamic education governance. Government institutions need to develop evaluation mechanisms, provide institutional support, and ensure that moderation policies are adapted to different educational contexts. This is important because the challenges faced by Islamic education institutions vary depending on social, cultural, and organizational conditions.

Practically, this research suggests that Islamic education institutions should strengthen three main areas: curriculum innovation, educator development, and institutional culture. Curriculum innovation is needed to ensure that religious learning is connected with social realities. Educator development is required to ensure that teachers and lecturers can deliver religious education through inclusive approaches. Meanwhile, institutional culture must support dialogue, respect, and cooperation among students and educational communities.

Overall, the implications of this study indicate that religious moderation policy represents an important direction for the future development of Islamic education in Indonesia. The policy provides a framework for balancing religious commitment with social responsibility. By strengthening implementation mechanisms and institutional support, Islamic education can contribute not only to individual religious development but also to the creation of a peaceful, inclusive, and democratic society.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that religious moderation policy during the Lukman Hakim Saifuddin era represented a significant transformation in the direction of Islamic education policy in Indonesia. The findings show that religious moderation was not merely a religious discourse but became an educational policy framework implemented through curriculum integration, educator development, and institutional strengthening. The scientific contribution of this research lies in positioning religious moderation as a policy instrument within Islamic education studies, expanding previous discussions that mainly focused on conceptual and social dimensions. This study demonstrates that the development of Islamic education policy requires integration between religious values, national commitment, and the realities of a multicultural society.

This study also highlights that the sustainability of religious moderation policy requires continuous support through curriculum development, teacher capacity building, institutional evaluation, and collaboration among educational stakeholders. However, this research is limited by its focus on national-level policy documents and does not extensively explore the experiences of teachers, students, and educational institutions in implementing moderation policies. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies at the institutional level through interviews, observations, and comparative analysis across different Islamic education institutions and policy periods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation and impact of religious moderation in Islamic education.

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