



## Strategy for Strengthening Religious Moderation Among Minority Muslim Millennials: Policy Study at IAIN Sorong

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### Article Info

#### Received

October 07, 2024

#### Revised

December 02, 2024

#### Accepted

December 03, 2024

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to explore the role of the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sorong in strengthening religious moderation in Muslim minority areas, especially in Southwest Papua. As the only State Islamic Religious College in this region, IAIN Sorong has a strategic position in grounding the values of religious moderation, which is supported by the high index of religious harmony in the region (78.63 percent). This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method to describe in detail how religious moderation is understood, implemented, and promoted in the academic environment of IAIN Sorong. The results show that IAIN Sorong implements religious moderation through various programs and activities that prioritize the values of national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. These programs include interfaith dialogues, seminars, multicultural courses, and cultural festivals, which create an inclusive and harmonious campus atmosphere. The strategy of religious moderation at IAIN Sorong involves a comprehensive approach in education, extracurricular activities, and community service, which is also supported by the Center for Religious Moderation Studies. With a strong national commitment, IAIN Sorong strives to create a peaceful campus environment and become an example in building a moderate, tolerant, and peace-loving society. This study confirms the important role of IAIN Sorong in overseeing religious moderation in Southwest Papua.*

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Religious Moderation, Religious Harmony, Interfaith dialogue, inclusive.

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Sorong dalam penguatan moderasi beragama di wilayah minoritas Muslim, khususnya di Papua Barat Daya. Sebagai satu-satunya Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri di kawasan ini, IAIN Sorong memiliki posisi strategis dalam membudayakan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama, yang didukung oleh tingginya indeks kerukunan umat beragama di wilayah tersebut (78,63 persen). Studi ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif deskriptif untuk menggambarkan secara rinci bagaimana moderasi beragama dipahami, diimplementasikan, dan dipromosikan di lingkungan akademik IAIN Sorong. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa IAIN Sorong mengimplementasikan moderasi beragama melalui berbagai program dan kegiatan yang mengedepankan nilai-nilai komitmen kebangsaan, toleransi, anti-kekerasan, dan akomodasi budaya lokal. Program-program ini meliputi dialog antaragama, seminar, mata kuliah multikultural, dan festival budaya, yang menciptakan suasana kampus yang inklusif dan harmonis. Strategi moderasi beragama di IAIN Sorong melibatkan pendekatan komprehensif dalam pendidikan, kegiatan ekstrakurikuler, dan pengabdian masyarakat, yang juga didukung oleh Pusat Studi Moderasi Beragama. Dengan komitmen kebangsaan yang kuat, IAIN Sorong berupaya membentuk lingkungan kampus yang damai dan menjadi contoh dalam membangun masyarakat yang moderat, toleran, dan cinta damai. Penelitian ini menegaskan peran penting IAIN Sorong dalam mengawal moderasi beragama di Papua Barat Daya.

**Kata kunci:** Pendidikan Islam, Moderasi beragama, Kerukunan umat beragama, Dialog antaragama, inklusif



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**How to Cite:**

Chudzaifah, I., Sukiman, S., Hikmah, A., & Toyibah, N. (2024). Strategy for Strengthening Religious Moderation Among Minority Muslim Millennials: Policy Study at IAIN Sorong. *Arfannur*, 5(3), 217 - 236.  
<https://doi.org/10.24260/arfannur.v5i3.3692>

## A. INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation has become a hot topic of discussion in this decade. This discussion has not only strengthened at the national level in Indonesia, but also at the global level. In global forums, the article "religious moderation" was voiced in large forums of Islamic countries. Mohammad Hashim Kamali captured the progress of this article well. He wrote that since 2003, actions carrying the flag of religious moderation have emerged in Islamic countries. In 2003, the International Assembly for Moderate Islamic Thought and Culture emerged in Jordan, followed by a similar institution in Kuwait a year later. In 2008, al-Qaradawi's Center for Islamic Moderation and Renewal emerged in Doha, followed by the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation—GMMF—in Kuala Lumpur in 2012 (Abdallah, 2021).

Another interesting development also emerged in Malaysia with the establishment of the Institute Wasatiyyah Malaysia (IWM) at the Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia in 2013, followed by the establishment of the International Institute of Wasatiyyah (IIW) at the International Islamic University Malaysia. The Amman Message 2005 and "A Common Word" 2007, the Mecca Declaration in December 2005, and the Charter of Moderation in Religious Practice issued by Singapore's Islamic Scholars and Religious Teachers Association in September 2003 are also important parts of the spirit of religious moderation (Abdallah, 2021).

Being religious is the act of embracing or adhering to a religion, while religion is a system of belief in God with teachings of devotion and obligations associated with that belief (Siregar et al., 2023). There are many religions in the world, and in Indonesia the religions recognized by the state are Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In terms of language, being religious means adhering to a religion, as in the example "I am Muslim and he is Christian." Being religious also means worshiping, obeying religion, and living according to religious principles. For example, "He comes from a religious family." Being religious can also mean greatly worshiping or prioritizing something, as in the example "They are religious about property." In terms, being religious is spreading peace and compassion anytime, anywhere, and to anyone. Religion is here to maintain the dignity, status, and dignity of humanity (Bakar, 2015). Therefore, religion should not be used as a tool to demean or negate others. We must always spread peace to anyone, anywhere, and anytime.

Religious moderation as a religious and socio-cultural practice in the country is not a new thing. The Indonesian nation has a strong culture and social capital that is rooted in this matter. We are accustomed to being tolerant, open-minded, respecting kinship, and appreciating diversity. We can conclude that such basic values are the foundation and philosophy of the Indonesian nation in the practice of religious moderation. In fact, this moderate teaching is found in all religions because each religion basically directs its followers to respect human values (T. P. K. A. RI, 2019). In the discourse of Islamic religiosity in Indonesia, there are many terms that substantially have the same meaning as the term religious moderation, including Islam Nusantara, Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin, Islam wasathiyah, cultured

Islam, progressive Islam, and many other terms.

Religious moderation is our perspective on religion in a moderate way, namely understanding and practicing religious teachings without being extreme (Abror, 2020). Extremism, radicalism, hate speech, and the breakdown of relations between religious communities are problems currently facing the Indonesian nation. Religious moderation is a choice to have a balanced, fair, and non-extremist perspective, attitude, and behavior in religion. Religious moderation is the key to creating tolerance and harmony, both at the local, national, and global levels (Jamaluddin, 2022). Choosing moderation and rejecting extremism and liberalism in religion is the key to balance for the sake of maintaining civilization and creating peace. With moderation, religious people can treat others with respect, accept differences, and live together in peace and harmony. In a multicultural society like Indonesia, religious moderation is not just a choice, but a necessity (Islamy, 2022).

According to Abdurrahman Wahid, religious moderation is a concept that can build tolerance and harmony to strengthen national unity and integrity (Noviani et al., 2024). Quoting the opinion of Burga & Damopolli, it is stated that as a form of effort to create harmony or harmony between the nation and religion, religious moderation is needed, namely by being normal or neutral and not exaggerating in terms of religion and not directly stating it. he is the most correct so that it can create a safe, harmonious, and peaceful social environment (Susanto & Judijanto, n.d.). So it can be concluded briefly that religious moderation is very closely related and related to the attitude of maintaining togetherness and realizing behavior, namely tolerance, where we can see that we emphasize the attitude of mutual understanding across diversity. Religious moderation is a teaching that is suitable and appropriate to realize the welfare of the Indonesian archipelago with its very diverse nation. As a diverse nation, moderation, justice, and balance are non-negotiable to realize harmony between communities. As citizens of Indonesia, each person has balanced rights and obligations to improve a safe and peaceful life together. If this can be realized, then every citizen can become a complete Indonesian human being, and can also become a human being who practices religion completely (T. B. K. RI, 2019).

The commitment of the Indonesian government to position religious moderation as an inseparable part of the Mental and Cultural Revolution, RPJMN 2020-2024 further strengthens the importance of religious moderation in a global context. Starting in 2019, the Ministry of Religion has launched programs to mainstream religious moderation that enlighten in improving religious perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors that are *wasathiyah*, creating peace, respecting heterogeneity, respecting the dignity of humanity regardless of gender, upholding noble civilization, and advancing the life of humanity which is realized in a life of trustworthiness, balance, *ihsan*, tolerance, love for humanity without discrimination, and respecting heterogeneity (K. RI, 2020).

Religious moderation is the key so that no matter how diverse the interpretations and understandings of religion are, they are maintained according to the provisions so that they do not give rise to extreme behavior. Lukman Hakim Saefudin as the former Minister of Religion explained that religious moderation is not an ideology. Religious moderation is a method related to the process of understanding and practicing religious teachings so that in practice it is always on a moderate path. Moderate here means not extreme or excessive. So what is moderated here is the way of being religious, not the religious teachings (Amin, 2021). Religion itself is a teaching that has been perfected because it comes from the Most Perfect God. But in practice, each human being has differences in understanding and practicing religious

teachings. This is because each person has limitations in interpreting religious teachings, which causes diversity. If the existing understanding and interpretation are not in accordance with the values of religion, of course, they will be trapped in an understanding that has implications for extreme actions. This is what is then called being religious or extreme. IAIN Sorong as a higher education institution under the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, must be a driving force or catalyst in grounding religious moderation, especially in minority Muslim areas.

IAIN Sorong is the only State Religious College in Southwest Papua with various resources and facilities. Therefore, the position of IAIN Sorong in Southwest Papua has a very strategic role. This is also supported by the high index of religious harmony in Southwest Papua with a value of 78.63 percent. Higher education has a major influence on the lives of the wider community, both in the present and the future, therefore Islamic higher education institutions, especially IAIN Sorong, have a major obligation and responsibility to the community in overseeing religious moderation. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of higher education institutions, especially IAIN Sorong, in strengthening religious moderation in minority Muslim areas and to analyze the policies implemented at IAIN Sorong in strengthening religious moderation.

Many studies related to religious moderation have been conducted by academics. Literature studies on religious moderation conducted by (Shihab, 2019), (Akhmadi, 2019), (Abror, 2020), (K. N. Islam, 2020), (Junaedi, 2019), (Saihu, 2021) in general, the results of this study are related to the concept of religious moderation as a result of a review of various sources. A study on moderation in digital space conducted by (Anwar & Haq, 2019), (Wibowo, 2019), (Novia & Wasehudin, 2020), (Setia & Imron, 2021), (Kosasih, 2019) in general, the research focuses on strategies in campaigning for religious moderation in digital space.

Studies on religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools have been conducted by (Muhtarom et al., 2020), (Maskuri et al., 2020), (Nugraha & Nurwadjah, 2021), (Khotimah, 2020), (A. Nurdin & Naqqiyah, 2019), (Aziz, 2020). The study focuses on the implementation of religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools and how to develop it in Islamic boarding schools. Studies on moderation in higher education have been conducted by (J. P. Islam et al., 2021), (Sekarinasih, 2014), (Aziz & Najmudin, 2020), (Musyafak et al., 2021), (Muhtarom et al., 2020), (Hefni, 2020), (Salamah et al., 2020). The existing studies focus on the strategy of implementing religious moderation through teaching materials. The difference between the literature reviewed and this article lies in the efforts taken by policy makers/leaders in universities, and the author conducted research in a minority Muslim area. The literature described above is some of the previous research that became the framework for writing this article.

## B. METHOD

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research. This approach aims to investigate and describe existing conditions or phenomena without manipulating the research object. In other words, the results obtained describe the description (Siregar et al., 2020) of the construction of religious moderation at IAIN Sorong. In the context of research on religious moderation at IAIN Sorong, this method allows researchers to describe in detail how religious moderation is understood, implemented, and promoted in the university environment.

Descriptive qualitative research gives researchers the freedom to use themselves as the main instrument in data collection and analysis (Rukajat, 2018). In this case, researchers will be active observers in exploring understanding, attitudes, and behaviors related to religious moderation at IAIN Sorong. This approach allows researchers to gain a deep and contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The data generated from this study are qualitative data, which will be analyzed and presented in the form of descriptions that are in accordance with the actual conditions in the field. This descriptive approach allows researchers to comprehensively describe how religious moderation is understood and implemented by various parties in the IAIN Sorong environment.

The steps in this study include data collection through participant observation, in-depth interviews with various stakeholders at IAIN Sorong, and document analysis related to policies and programs that have been implemented to promote religious moderation. The collected data will be analyzed systematically to identify patterns, themes, and key findings related to religious moderation in the IAIN Sorong environment. By using a descriptive qualitative approach, it is hoped that this study can provide a comprehensive understanding of how religious moderation is understood and implemented at IAIN Sorong, as well as its contribution to promoting harmony and tolerance in the minority Muslim area.

### C. RESULT AND DISCUSION

#### 1. Result

The following are the results of interviews obtained from 2 informants/sources who are the leaders of IAIN Sorong.

Table 4. 2  
Results of Interviews with the leaders of IAIN Sorong

NO.	QUESTION	ANSWER
1.	How is religious moderation implemented in the IAIN Sorong environment?	The implementation of religious moderation in the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sorong is carried out through various activities and programs aimed at instilling the values of moderation and tolerance among academicians. IAIN Sorong has responded to religious moderation and this is part of the institution's Vision and Mission, and as a form of concern for religious moderation, IAIN Sorong has formed a center for religious moderation or a house of moderation under LPPM and there have been activities both externally and internally.
2.	What activities within IAIN Sorong are based on religious moderation?	The State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sorong has various activities based on religious moderation to create a balance in understanding and practicing religious teachings, as well as strengthening tolerance between religious communities. These activities include interfaith and intercultural dialogues that invite various religious and cultural adherents to discuss tolerance and harmony. In addition, public lectures and seminars featuring moderate religious figures and academics are often held to provide insight to students and lecturers. IAIN Sorong also focuses on character and ethics education through programs that emphasize inclusive religious teachings. Students are also involved in social and humanitarian activities by establishing the

NO.	QUESTION	ANSWER
		<p>B-Care student organization. Spiritual and religious guidance through routine studies every Monday morning and religious lectures after congregational prayers are also held to emphasize the importance of moderation in religion. In addition, training and workshops on religious moderation and moderate preaching methods are part of campus activities. Cultural and religious festivals are also held to strengthen tolerance and mutual understanding among students. To support research, IAIN Sorong encourages and funds research on religious moderation and publishes the results. Furthermore, IAIN Sorong has a Center for Religious Moderation Studies which specifically conducts studies and develops curricula that support religious moderation. These activities aim to educate students to become moderate individuals in religion, while creating a harmonious and tolerant campus environment.</p>
3.	<p>How does the community in the IAIN Sorong environment respond to differences in beliefs, traditions and origins?</p>	<p>The community in the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sorong is a multicultural society with students from various provinces in Indonesia, the community in the campus environment responds to differences in beliefs, traditions and origins by prioritizing tolerance, inclusivity and mutual respect. Open dialogues and regular discussions are held to strengthen understanding and appreciation of differences. Through the curriculum and extracurricular activities, the importance of tolerance is taught to students, which is enriched with cultural festivals and art performances that showcase the diversity of Indonesian traditions. Cooperation in social activities and community service strengthens a sense of solidarity. Moderate and inclusive religious guidance is instilled through regular lectures and studies, supported by research from the Center for the Study of Religious Moderation. Character education that includes moral and ethical values helps shape an attitude of respect for differences. Inclusive campus policies ensure fair treatment for all students and staff, while academic guidance and counseling support students in understanding and overcoming differences. With this approach, the IAIN Sorong community creates a harmonious, respectful, and inclusive atmosphere, where every individual feels accepted regardless of differences in beliefs, traditions, or origins.</p>
4.	<p>Are religious understanding and practice in the IAIN Sorong environment balanced between worldly and afterlife aspects?</p>	<p>Religious understanding and practice in the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sorong environment tend to achieve a balance between worldly and afterlife aspects. The curriculum at IAIN Sorong is designed comprehensively, covering aqidah, worship, and morals that are afterlife, as well as science, technology, and practical skills that are relevant to the needs of the world of work. Extracurricular activities and student organizations support personality and professional development through entrepreneurship seminars, skills training, and social projects. Spiritual and moral development through halaqah, routine studies, and religious lectures build strong character and personality according to religious teachings. Research and community service also include religious studies and social, economic, and environmental issues, combining religious values with real contributions to the welfare of society. The Center for Religious Moderation Studies and other research institutions promote moderation and balance in religion. Character education programs that include religious ethical and moral values are carried out systematically, encouraging students to develop integrity, responsibility, and social concern. Through these approaches, IAIN Sorong ensures that students have strong worldly knowledge and</p>

NO.	QUESTION	ANSWER
		skills as well as a solid spiritual and moral foundation, creating a harmonious balance between worldly and afterlife needs.
5.	Have the values of anti-violence and anti-radicalism been instilled in the IAIN Sorong environment?	In the environment of the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sorong, the values of anti-violence and anti-radicalism have been systematically instilled. IAIN Sorong integrates religious moderation education into the curriculum and extracurricular activities, emphasizing the importance of tolerance, dialogue, and respect for differences. Through seminars, workshops, and public lectures featuring moderate religious figures and academics, students are invited to understand the dangers of violence and radicalism and how to deal with them. Spiritual development activities such as halaqah, regular studies, and religious lectures also emphasize peaceful and inclusive Islamic teachings, distancing themselves from extremist attitudes. The Center for Religious Moderation Studies at IAIN Sorong conducts research and studies that promote the values of peace and moderation, and develops programs that support anti-radicalism efforts. With this approach, IAIN Sorong strives to create a harmonious campus environment, where students are equipped with a strong understanding of the importance of anti-violence and anti-radicalism in religious and social life.
6.	How is the strategy for implementing religious moderation used in the IAIN Sorong environment?	The strategy for implementing religious moderation in the IAIN Sorong environment is carried out through a comprehensive and structured approach. The educational curriculum is integrated with courses that teach the values of moderation, tolerance, and inclusiveness, as well as character building that includes religious ethics and morality. IAIN Sorong also holds interfaith dialogues, seminars, and public lectures by presenting moderate religious figures to provide students with broader insights. Extracurricular activities and student organizations play an important role in promoting moderate attitudes through various social programs and projects that involve cross-cultural and religious collaboration. The Center for Religious Moderation Studies on this campus actively conducts research and studies that support the development of moderation-based programs. In addition, IAIN Sorong also sends several lecturers to attend religious moderation training at the Ministry of Religion.
7.	What is the direction of the development of religious moderation in the IAIN Sorong environment?	The direction of the development of religious moderation in the IAIN Sorong environment continues to develop with a focus on improving the understanding, practice, and dissemination of the values of moderation. IAIN Sorong continues to encourage the integration of the concept of moderation into all aspects of academic life, from the educational curriculum to extracurricular activities and community service. The development of a more in-depth curriculum on religious moderation, including an emphasis on an inclusive understanding of various religious and cultural perspectives, is one of the priorities. IAIN Sorong also seeks to strengthen its network of cooperation with other institutions that have a similar commitment to promoting religious moderation. In addition, strengthening the role of the Center for Religious Moderation Studies in conducting research, training, and counseling is expected to become a center of excellence in efforts to increase awareness and practice of religious moderation at the local and national levels. Through these efforts, IAIN Sorong is committed to continuing to be an institution that is an example in building a tolerant, inclusive, and peaceful society based on the principles of religious moderation.

NO.	QUESTION	ANSWER
8.	What is the concept of religious moderation in IAIN Sorong?	The concept of religious moderation in IAIN Sorong includes a balanced and inclusive understanding of Islamic teachings that respect diversity, tolerance, and avoid extremism and intolerance. Religious moderation is seen as an attitude and practice that promotes interfaith dialogue, social harmony, and shared prosperity. IAIN Sorong emphasizes the importance of understanding and practicing religious teachings in the context of a dynamic era and complex modern challenges. This is done by integrating the values of moderation in the educational curriculum, religious activities, and community service. Religious moderation at IAIN Sorong also includes the development of a balanced personality between spiritual and material dimensions. In addition, this campus encourages students and staff to become agents of peace and development who promote unity, peace, and justice in society. Thus, the concept of religious moderation at IAIN Sorong is not only a foundation for individual religious life, but also a foothold for realizing an inclusive and harmonious society.
9.	Is the community at IAIN Sorong accommodating to local culture?	Yes, the community at IAIN Sorong tends to be accommodating to local culture. The campus promotes values of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity, which are reflected in various daily activities and interactions. Students and staff are encouraged to understand and respect the cultural diversity in Sorong and its surroundings, including local traditions, customs, and regional languages. The campus often holds cultural events and festivals that showcase the richness of local culture, and invites local communities to participate in these activities. In addition, IAIN Sorong also encourages students to get involved in community service projects that are oriented towards local culture, such as environmental conservation, cultural documentation, and cultural education. This accommodating attitude creates an inclusive and respectful environment, where cultural diversity is considered an asset that enriches campus life.
10.	How is the national commitment upheld in the IAIN Sorong environment?	The national commitment upheld in the IAIN Sorong environment is reflected in efforts to build a strong national awareness and spirit among students and staff. IAIN Sorong emphasizes the importance of love for the homeland, unity, and togetherness as fundamental values in building the nation. Through character education, spiritual development, and community service activities, IAIN Sorong strengthens awareness of the important role of individuals in the development and progress of the nation. Students are encouraged to be active in activities that contribute to local and national development, such as social projects, community development, and public policy advocacy. In addition, this campus also provides in-depth knowledge of Indonesian history and culture, so that students can better understand and appreciate cultural diversity and national values. Thus, IAIN Sorong is committed to producing a generation that has a high national awareness and is ready to play an active role in realizing the vision of Indonesia as an advanced, united, and sovereign nation.

In short, the essence of implementing religious moderation in the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sorong includes various activities, implementation strategies, understanding, and the direction of developing religious moderation as follows:

1. The implementation of religious moderation at IAIN Sorong is carried out through programs and activities that instill the values of moderation and tolerance among the



academic community.

2. Activities based on religious moderation include interfaith dialogue, public lectures, seminars, character education, social activities, and cultural festivals.
3. The community at IAIN Sorong responds to differences with tolerance, open dialogue, and respect for diversity.
4. Understanding and practicing religion tends to be balanced between worldly and afterlife aspects, integrated into the curriculum and campus activities.
5. The values of anti-violence and radicalism are instilled through the curriculum, spiritual activities, and research at the Center for Religious Moderation Studies.
6. The implementation of religious moderation is carried out through a comprehensive approach, including the curriculum, extracurricular activities, research and community service.
7. The direction of developing religious moderation includes increasing understanding, practice, and dissemination of moderation values through collaboration and strengthening the role of the Center for Religious Moderation Studies.
8. The concept of religious moderation at IAIN Sorong includes an inclusive understanding, avoiding extremism, and promoting interfaith dialogue.
9. The community at IAIN Sorong is accommodating to local culture, reflected in cultural activities and daily interactions.
10. National commitment is emphasized through character education, spiritual development, community service activities, and understanding of Indonesian history and culture.

It can be concluded that this institution consistently upholds the principles of religious moderation, tolerance, and nationality. Through various activities and programs based on religious moderation, IAIN Sorong strives to create an inclusive, harmonious, and just environment. This campus integrates the values of moderation into the educational curriculum, religious activities, research and community service, and pays attention to the development of a balanced personality between the spiritual and material dimensions. In addition, an accommodating attitude towards local culture and a strong national commitment are also integral parts of the IAIN Sorong campus.

## **2. Discussion**

In discussing the results of this study, the author narrows it down to 4 sub-discussions which are indicators of religious moderation developed by the Ministry of Religion, namely: National Commitment, Anti-Violence, Tolerance, and Acceptance of Local Traditions

### **a. National Commitment**

National spirit and commitment are two important elements that are very much needed to strengthen unity and integrity. National spirit reflects the awareness to place the highest loyalty to the nation and state. Meanwhile, national commitment is the attachment or determination to do something for the nation and state. These two concepts are similar to the values of nationalism and patriotism (Fatriana, 2022).

Every nation needs an attitude of nationalism and patriotism. The Indonesian nation also needs these two attitudes to ensure the survival and glory of the nation and state. The main purpose of this nationalism and patriotism is to strengthen unity and integrity in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). IAIN Sorong emphasizes

the importance of national commitment as an integral part of character education and spiritual development. This is done through several initiatives, including:

### 1) Character Education

Character education is basically aimed at developing individuals who have integrity, empathy, a sense of responsibility towards themselves and society, and a commitment to upholding truth and justice (Agboola & Tsai, 2012). It plays an important role in shaping a harmonious, cultured, and morally conscious society. The process of character education can take various forms, including direct instruction, imitating role models, and experiential learning in everyday life (Singh, 2019). Nurturing important character traits from a young age is a must, and one effective approach involves integrating local wisdom from the surrounding environment into education (Goodman, 2019). Local wisdom represents cultural values inherited by a region, passed down from generation to generation, and is able to shape the basic character of an individual (Sumartias et al., 2020). Incorporating local wisdom into education not only strengthens cultural identity but also fosters strong character development among students (Samani et al., 2018). In addition, character education must be aligned with local culture to ensure its relevance and applicability in society while still preparing individuals for the global stage (Sakti et al., 2024).

The curriculum at IAIN Sorong explicitly integrates national values, which include an understanding of Pancasila, national history, and Indonesian culture. This character education aims to form students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have awareness and responsibility as Indonesian citizens. Character education that integrates local wisdom and national values is a strategic effort in forming individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have a strong sense of responsibility and national identity. The curriculum at IAIN Sorong, with a focus on the values of Pancasila, national history, and Indonesian culture, reflects the importance of character education that is aligned with local culture. With this approach, it is hoped that a generation will be formed that has a strong national awareness, who is able to contribute to national development and is ready to compete on the global stage.

### 2) Community Service Activities

Community service is important for students because through this activity, they can develop social and professional skills, such as communication, leadership, and problem solving (Zunaidi, 2024). Students also gain a direct understanding of the social, economic, and cultural realities faced by society, which builds empathy and concern (Rosdialena & Alrasi, 2023). In addition, community service instills national values and social responsibility, thus forming a generation that cares about the progress of the nation (Firdausyi et al., 2021). In community service activities, students can also apply the knowledge learned on campus to solve real problems, improve practical understanding and applied skills. This, in the end, increases the competitiveness and quality of students, because they have practical experience, interpersonal skills, and a commitment to community development according to their needs which are added value in the world of work (Tapio et al., 2024).

The community service program at IAIN Sorong is directed at developing a sense of nationality through activities involving the local community. This includes

literacy programs, social assistance, and skills training that benefit the surrounding community. IAIN Sorong also implements a national KKN program where this program involves students from various campuses from various regions. This is an effort to realize the national commitment. Thus, this service experience not only builds students' professional skills, but also creates a generation that is committed to contributing to the progress of the nation and maintaining the unity of Indonesia.

### 3) Spiritual Guidance

Spiritual guidance can play an important role in improving the performance of the academic community and become a bridge for strengthening the national commitment. Through spiritual guidance, individuals not only get deep spiritual and emotional strengthening, but are also inspired to work with integrity, responsibility, and ethics, all of which have a direct impact on improving the quality of performance (Xu, 2024). In an academic context, academics who have spiritual balance tend to be more motivated, disciplined, and have a productive work attitude, so that the results provide a positive contribution to educational institutions (Husni, 2023).

In addition, spiritual guidance also instills national values such as love for the homeland, unity, and concern for others. This coaching activity can create space for the entire academic community to jointly reflect on the meaning of nationality and foster empathy and solidarity between citizens. Thus, spiritual coaching not only improves individual performance, but also strengthens the commitment of the academic community to contribute to the nation, play an active role in the progress of the country, and maintain national unity amidst various differences. Through routine religious activities at IAIN Sorong, such as religious studies and lectures, national values are integrated with religious teachings. This strengthens the awareness that religion and nationalism are not contradictory, but rather complement each other. Thus, spiritual coaching not only improves individual performance, but also encourages the academic community to play an active role in the progress of the nation and maintain national unity.

#### **b. Anti-Violence**

Islamic Religious Colleges have social obligations inherent in the prophetic mission of Islam, including education, research, and community service. If these social obligations are not carried out, universities will function only as meaningless lighthouses, or even risk becoming sources of knowledge that can damage civilization and eliminate human values (Sumarto, 2021). In this context, the concept of anti-violence becomes very relevant. Universities must play an active role in creating an environment that supports tolerance, respects differences, and overcomes all forms of violence, both physical and psychological (Ridwan & Abdurrahim, 2023). Through education that prioritizes religious and humanitarian values, the academic community is taught to reject violence and understand the importance of dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution. By internalizing the values of anti-violence in teaching, research, and community service, Islamic Religious Colleges can contribute to building a harmonious and civilized society. This is not only in line with the prophetic mission of Islam, but also shows the institution's commitment to play an active role in creating a safe and respectful environment, where every individual can live in peace and contribute to a better civilization.

IAIN Sorong is committed to instilling anti-violence and anti-radicalism values

among its academic community. Some of the strategies implemented include:

### 1) Anti-Violence Curriculum

Courses that discuss issues of violence, radicalism, and extremism such as multicultural education, Pancasila and citizenship education and others are included in the IAIN Sorong curriculum. This course teaches students to recognize and avoid radical ideologies, and to foster a critical attitude towards violent propaganda. Through multicultural education, students are taught about the diversity of cultures, religions, and traditions that exist in society (Ridho et al., 2022). This course not only focuses on recognizing differences, but also emphasizes the importance of tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation between groups. By understanding the perspectives and experiences of various groups, students are expected to develop empathy and reduce the potential for conflict that arises due to differences.

Pancasila and citizenship education also play a crucial role in shaping students' character as responsible citizens (Sesilia et al., 2024). This course equips students with knowledge about the basic values of Pancasila which prioritize national unity, as well as the rights and obligations of citizens. With a good understanding of Pancasila, students can more easily recognize radical ideologies that conflict with national values and develop a critical attitude towards violent propaganda (Hakis, 2020). Furthermore, this course encourages students to engage in discussions and research related to issues of violence and radicalization. Through group projects, seminars, and workshops, students are given the opportunity to analyze real cases and formulate effective prevention strategies. Thus, they become not only recipients of information, but also active agents of change in creating a safe and peaceful society.

### 2) Spiritual Activities

Spiritual activities such as lectures, religious studies, and religious discussions are aimed at conveying messages of peace and anti-violence. This message is emphasized through the interpretation of religious texts that support peace and tolerance. Through the interpretation of religious texts, messages that support peace and tolerance can be expressed in a relevant and applicable way. For example, verses of the Qur'an and hadith that talk about compassion, respect for others, and the importance of resolving conflicts peacefully can be the main focus of each session.

In this way, participants not only hear theory, but are also invited to reflect on and apply these principles in their daily lives. In addition, this activity can also be a forum for dialogue and exchange of ideas, where participants can discuss various social issues related to violence and intolerance. Open and constructive discussions can help educate the public about the negative impacts of violence and the need to create an environment of mutual respect (Acep et al., 2023).

By strengthening the understanding of the values of peace in religious teachings, spiritual activities with an open discussion approach have the potential to create a generation that is more tolerant, wise, and sensitive to social problems (Falakh, 2023). Over time, the hope is that these messages of peace will not only become part of religious activities, but will also be absorbed in the behavior and attitudes of society, so that a harmonious academic society free from violence is realized.

### **c. Tolerance**

Tolerance can be interpreted as harmony in differences. Therefore, tolerance includes the readiness of individuals and society to live according to established rules, which is the essence of democracy (Pitaloka et al., 2021). Hjem et al. also argue that tolerance includes an attitude of mutual respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the diversity of world cultures, various forms of expression, and the way humans live their lives (Hjerm et al., 2020). In addition, tolerance can also be interpreted as a conscious effort to restrain oneself when faced with things that are not liked (Janmaat & Keating, 2019).

The attitude of tolerance is one of the main pillars of religious moderation at IAIN Sorong. Efforts to instill an attitude of tolerance among academics include:

#### 1) Interfaith Dialogue

Interfaith dialogue at IAIN Sorong is routinely held with the aim of building deeper understanding and increasing mutual respect among adherents of different religions. This activity provides an opportunity for participants to share views, identify differences, and celebrate similarities, all of which play an important role in strengthening social harmony and harmony. Through this dialogue, participants are invited to learn from each other's perspectives, discuss sensitive issues in a safe environment, and develop a strong sense of empathy for different beliefs and values. Usually, this dialogue activity is held in various forms of scientific discussion forums, such as seminars, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and Interfaith Harmony Forums (FKUB).

Each forum has its own approach and focus. Seminars and scientific discussions tend to discuss academic perspectives and theories related to interfaith relations, while FGDs provide an opportunity for participants to engage in in-depth discussions about personal experiences and relevant local issues. FKUB, as an interfaith forum, creates a special space for representatives from various religious communities to exchange ideas and work together to solve social problems that may arise. In addition, interfaith dialogue at IAIN Sorong also invites students, lecturers, and religious leaders from the surrounding community to be actively involved. By inviting various groups, this dialogue not only emphasizes tolerance, but also emphasizes the importance of collaboration in strengthening an inclusive society and respecting diversity. This activity is expected to create a generation of young people who not only understand and accept differences, but also play an active role as agents of peace in their respective environments, both in academic and social spheres.

Interfaith dialogue is a complex and challenging process. As expressed by Kimball, various obstacles still hinder effective communication between adherents of different religions. These obstacles can be in the form of fundamental differences in beliefs, lack of cultural understanding, to skepticism or prejudice formed due to differences in views (Kimball, 2003). However, interest and willingness to engage in dialogue among the community are now increasing. This can be seen from the increasing number of dialogue initiatives held in various forums, both formal and informal. According to Montgomery Watt, this interfaith dialogue has enormous benefits, not only in creating a better understanding and appreciation of other religions, but also in deepening individual insight into their own religion (Anshori, 2022).

When someone is open to understanding other people's perspectives, they will be more motivated to reflect on and internalize their beliefs, thus enriching their understanding and spiritual experience. Through dialogue, differences are no longer seen as threats, but as opportunities to learn and develop an attitude of mutual respect. More than just understanding the teachings of other religions, interfaith dialogue also opens up opportunities for participants to realize that many universal values, such as peace, justice, and humanity, are actually the foundations of various religions. Thus, this dialogue helps strengthen the view that religions have a shared vision in creating a better world. It also encourages the creation of interfaith collaboration in dealing with social issues, such as poverty, injustice, and environmental crises, which require cooperation from all humanity. Overall, interfaith dialogue not only functions as a means to resolve misunderstandings or conflicts, but also as a bridge connecting individuals from various faith backgrounds. In the long term, this dialogue is expected to strengthen harmony between religious communities and build a more inclusive, harmonious society based on mutual trust.

## 2) Seminars and Public Lectures

Seminars and public lectures at IAIN Sorong often raise the major theme of Religious Moderation, presenting figures from various religions, scholars, and practitioners who are experienced in diversity issues. The presence of figures from various religious backgrounds aims to provide deeper insight into the importance of tolerance, respect for differences, and strengthening the values of moderation in religion. Through direct presentations from the speakers, participants are not only invited to understand the concept of religious moderation, but also to explore the perspectives of other religions in viewing social, moral, and humanitarian issues. In addition to broadening horizons, this activity is an interactive event where students and lecturers have the opportunity to have direct dialogues, ask questions, and discuss various actual challenges faced in maintaining social harmony.

The themes raised include important issues such as radicalism, extremism, and the role of religion in creating peace and social harmony. With open dialogue, participants are encouraged to develop critical and open attitudes, while strengthening the values of peace and solidarity. This activity is also part of the institution's efforts to introduce and promote religious moderation practices that are relevant to the local situation, especially in Papua, where IAIN Sorong plays a role. Through this approach, the campus hopes to form students who are not only academically intelligent, but also wise in responding to differences and have a sense of responsibility to maintain harmony in society. Overall, this seminar and public lecture on Religious Moderation not only function as a means of learning, but also as part of the university's dedication to building a more tolerant, harmonious, and diversity-appreciating society (Ekawati et al., 2018).

## 3) Community Service

Community service is one of the media in order to foster an attitude of tolerance (Widiatmoko et al., 2021). In its participation in forming a tolerant society, IAIN Sorong carries out various community service programs that directly involve the local community, especially in the Papua region. These programs are designed with the aim of fostering mutual respect and strengthening national values and diversity.

Through various social, educational, and empowerment activities, IAIN Sorong strives to build harmonious relationships between students, lecturers, and communities with different cultural and religious backgrounds.

One example of this community service program is the implementation of training on the values of religious moderation, where participants are invited to understand the concept of tolerance within the framework of local religious and cultural values. This program not only targets students, but also community leaders, youth, and mothers who have an important role in educating and fostering the community. In this training, participants are given an understanding of the importance of living in peace and respecting each other, and are taught to prevent potential conflicts arising from misunderstandings between groups.

IAIN Sorong also partners with the local Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) to carry out activities oriented towards harmony between communities. Together with FKUB, the campus organizes various discussion forums and social activities, such as social services, humanitarian assistance, and interfaith religious events that can strengthen brotherhood between communities with different backgrounds. This is real evidence that IAIN Sorong is committed to being a bridge in building a peaceful, inclusive, and tolerant society. Overall, through these diverse community service programs, IAIN Sorong strives to not only provide direct benefits to the community, but also instill values of tolerance and respect for differences. These programs are expected to form a more open generation, who are able to live in harmony and work together despite differences in beliefs or cultures, as well as become agents of change in building a more tolerant and peaceful nation.

#### **d. Acceptance of Local Traditions**

The attitude of tolerance and the ability to accommodate local culture as part of the indicators of religious moderation in Indonesia reflects the importance of respecting diversity in social life (Muhtarom et al., 2020). This is needed to create harmony amidst social and religious pluralism in national life in Indonesia. Thus, this attitude is not only beneficial for individuals, but also contributes to the interests of all religious communities in Indonesia. Therefore, it is not excessive if this attitude of tolerance and accommodation towards local culture is in line with the principle of maqasid sharia, namely hifz ummah (maintaining the welfare of the people) (Siswanto & Islamy, 2022).

IAIN Sorong shows an accommodating attitude towards local culture as part of its commitment to religious moderation. The steps taken include:

##### **1) Integration of Local Culture in Campus Activities**

In everyday life, campus residents are encouraged to respect and practice local traditions, an effort that strengthens the ties between the campus and the surrounding community. This attitude is reflected in everyday behavior, such as respecting differences, using local languages in informal conversations, and actively participating in cultural events held by the local community. For example, in local traditional celebrations and ceremonies, both students and lecturers are often directly involved as participants or volunteers, showing sincere respect for the cultural heritage of the community.

Several community service programs also include a cultural education component, where students learn about local history, values, and traditions, so that

they can appreciate and understand more deeply the social context around the campus. In addition, the campus often holds special events involving the local community, such as cultural festivals or seminars on local wisdom, which serve as a means for students and lecturers to deepen their understanding and involvement in local culture. Such activities not only strengthen the relationship between the campus and the community, but also provide valuable experience for campus residents in practicing the values of tolerance, respecting differences, and building a spirit of togetherness within a cultural framework.

## 2) Education and Research

The curriculum and research at IAIN Sorong actively integrate the study of local culture, making it an important part of developing student competencies. In order to encourage students to better understand and appreciate local culture, they are given the opportunity to conduct research that focuses on the preservation and development of local culture. This program not only provides insight into the richness of regional culture, but also helps students to explore and analyze how local traditions can be in harmony with moderate religious values.

Through this research, students are expected to be able to explore the potential that exists in local culture and apply it in a harmonious religious context. For example, students can conduct research on traditional art practices, local religious rituals, or community value systems related to religion and culture. In addition, IAIN Sorong also organizes seminars and workshops involving cultural experts and practitioners to discuss the importance of preserving cultural heritage in a religious context. This activity provides a platform for students to discuss, exchange ideas, and get guidance from experts on how to harmonize local traditions with inclusive and moderate religious values. Thus, through a curriculum and research that focuses on local culture, IAIN Sorong strives to form a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has concern and commitment to cultural preservation, so that they can contribute positively to society and the country, and build a strong attitude of tolerance amidst the existing diversity.

## D. CONCLUSION

The implementation of religious moderation at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sorong is implemented through various programs and activities aimed at instilling the values of moderation, namely national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence and accommodation of local culture. Various activities oriented towards religious moderation, such as interfaith dialogue, seminars, multicultural-based courses and cultural festivals, play an important role in creating an inclusive and harmonious campus atmosphere. Students and the academic community at IAIN Sorong respond to differences in beliefs, traditions, and ethnic backgrounds with an attitude of tolerance and appreciation, which is demonstrated through open dialogue and constructive interaction in various activity programs. The understanding and practice of religion on this campus tends to be balanced between worldly and afterlife aspects, which are integrated into the educational curriculum. The values of anti-violence and radicalism are instilled systematically through the curriculum and religious activities, supported by research and community service from the Center for Religious Moderation Studies. The strategy for



implementing religious moderation is carried out with a comprehensive approach that includes education, extracurricular activities, and community service. The direction of developing religious moderation at IAIN Sorong focuses on improving understanding and practice, which involves collaboration with other institutions and strengthening the role of the Center for Religious Moderation Studies. The concept of religious moderation applied includes an inclusive understanding, which avoids extremism and encourages interfaith dialogue. The national commitment at IAIN Sorong is realized through character education and social activities, which emphasize the importance of love for the homeland and unity. Thus, IAIN Sorong is committed to creating an inclusive, harmonious, and just campus environment, and can be used as an example in building a moderate, tolerant, and peace-loving society.

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