

Exploring Inter-Religious-Based Instruction in Islamic Boarding School: Loved-Based Curriculum Perspectives

Hamdanah¹, Abd Halim Soebahar², Ahmad Faris Wijdan³ & Teguh Budiharso⁴

Abstract

The development of religious teaching oriented towards religious moderation and a Love-Based Curriculum within Indonesian pesantren implies the implementation of inter-religious instruction incorporating both interfaith and intra-faith dialogue as practical strategies for fostering inter-religious competence. This study aims to address two research questions: (1) What forms of inter-religious education practices are potentially developed within the curriculum design of Shofa Marwa Islamic boarding school? and (2) How is inter-religious-based education elaborated within the Shofa Marwa curriculum design to reflect characteristics of moderation and tolerance? To answer these questions, the researchers employ a hermeneutic phenomenological design within a qualitative methodological framework. Hermeneutic phenomenology aims to analyze individuals' lived experiences in order to understand the meaning of a phenomenon within its contextual setting through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA facilitates an in-depth exploration of how a relatively homogeneous group interprets significant life experiences, emphasizing individual meaning-making grounded in shared thematic patterns. This study involves eight participants—five men and three women—who have taught at Shofa Marwa pesantren for between 8 to 10 years. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions, and analyzed using a combination of content analysis and thematic analysis. The findings indicate that a transformation from a mono-religious instructional strategy towards inter-religious instruction fosters inclusive, pluralistic, and respectful educational practices aimed at promoting religious moderation and countering extremism. Inter-religious instruction, supported by both interfaith and intra-faith dialogue, contributes to tolerance and harmony in alignment with the principles of religious moderation and the Love-Based Curriculum. The second major finding identifies practical strategies within inter-religious instruction, including Dialog-Based Learning, Faith-Based Dialogue, and the Parallel Dialogue Model. The study's novelty lies in its focused exploration of curriculum design that integrates inter-religious values and structured interfaith practices as a framework for developing inter-religious competence within Islamic boarding school education.

Keywords: *Pesantren, religious moderation, interfaith, interreligious, interreligious competence.*

¹ Dr. Corresponding author, Jember Islamic University, East Java, Indonesia & KH Achmad Siddiq State Islamic University, Jember, East Java, Indonesia, email: hamdanahelqis@gmail.com

² Dr. KH Achmad Siddiq State Islamic University, Jember, East Java, Indonesia, email: ahalims1961@gmail.com

³ Dr. KH Achmad Siddiq State Islamic University, Jember, East Java, Indonesia, email: afariswijdan@gmail.com

⁴ Prof. Dr. UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia, email: teguhbudiharso@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

Introduction

Inter-religious education in Indonesia is increasingly positioned as a doctrinal and pedagogical response to religious conflict, grounded in the promotion of moderation through core values of pluralism, interfaith dialogue, and intra-faith dialogue (Brömssen et al., 2020; Muhaemin et al., 2023). Inter-religious education refers to an approach to teaching that explores religious and spiritual perspectives through diverse models, including confessional, phenomenological, and interpretative frameworks (Mosher, 2022). Rooted in pluralism (Eck, 2018), interfaith dialogue (Cornille, 2008), and interfaith leadership (Patel, 2016), inter-religious education serves as a foundational framework for both academic inquiry and practical application within inter-religious studies. Eck (2018) conceptualizes pluralism as the active engagement with diversity rather than mere coexistence, while Cornille (2008) identifies theological dispositions such as humility and empathy as essential conditions for constructive dialogue. Patel (2016) emphasizes leadership that cultivates interfaith cooperation oriented towards the common good. Inter-religious education thus contributes to fostering social harmony, mitigating radicalization, and strengthening tolerance within pluralistic societies (Bol, 2023; Burritt & Massam, 2020). It also supports the development of inclusive, dialogue-based curricula that enhance empathy and mutual understanding among students, while offering practical and policy-oriented insights for advancing interfaith literacy (Hannam et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, contemporary developments in religious education and inter-religious instruction are grounded in a series of national regulations. These include the Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), TAP MPRS RI No. XXVII/MPRS/1966 in conjunction with TAP MPR No. V/MPR/1973, which mandates that all educational institutions provide religious education from kindergarten to university level. More recently, Presidential Regulation (Perpres) Number 58 of 2023 on Strengthening Religious Moderation, enacted on 25 September 2023, and Decree No. 6077 of 2025 issued by the Director General of Islamic Education concerning the Love-Based Curriculum Guidelines, have further reinforced the policy direction towards moderation and tolerance. In accordance with the MPR provisions, every educational sector in Indonesia is required to offer religious instruction. To preserve social harmony and national stability, such religious education is expected to embody principles of moderation. Furthermore, the Love-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta, KBC) for madrasah education, developed under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, is designed to cultivate values of compassion,

empathy, and religious moderation among students (Athoillah et al., 2023; Kementerian Agama RI, 2025; Perpres No. 58/2023).

Research (Abdullah, 2023; 2024; Byrne, 2014; Cornille, 2008; Patel, 2016) demonstrates that inter-religious education plays a crucial role in fostering mutual understanding, reducing prejudice, and maintaining social harmony within pluralistic societies by encouraging dialogue and empathy. It equips individuals with the capacity to respond constructively to discrimination, religious diversity, and attempts to instrumentalize faith for domination or exclusion, thereby strengthening social cohesion (Abdullah, 2024; Byrne, 2014). Although the terms inter-religious education, interfaith education, and religious education are often used interchangeably, they carry distinct meanings. Inter-religious generally refers to interactions between different faith traditions, often within academic or dialogical contexts; interfaith emphasizes collaborative engagement among diverse religious communities towards shared objectives; while religious education typically involves teaching about one or more faith traditions for the purpose of knowledge and understanding (Cornille, 2008; Patel, 2016). In many contexts, inter-religious education seeks to address emerging dimensions of religious pluralism within contemporary societies (Abdullah, 2023). The depth of understanding fostered through inter-religious education significantly influences religious literacy, defined as the capacity to comprehend, analyze, and navigate the complex intersections of religion with social, political, and cultural life (Hermawan et al., 2025; Suhadi, 2016).

Global discourse highlights the persistent concern that religion may, under certain conditions, inspire violence, including discrimination and radicalism. At the same time, earlier assumptions that science, technology, and modernization would inevitably diminish or eliminate religion's social influence have proven overly simplistic (Horikoshi, 1987). In reality, numerous political and social developments across different countries cannot be adequately understood without recognizing the enduring role of religion. Failure to manage controversial issues within multireligious and multiracial societies may escalate into social unrest, criminal activity, or even violent conflict (Seiple, 2021). General challenges in inter-religious education include operating within mono-religious, conservative, or highly secular contexts that resist dialogue-based curricula or exclude pluralistic perspectives (Zaini, 2016). Key obstacles involve overcoming deeply entrenched intolerance, negotiating power imbalances among religious groups, addressing limited educator expertise in comparative religious studies, and fostering meaningful participation,

particularly within religiously homogeneous or conservative environments (Cadge, 2024; Suhadi, 2016; Zamroni et al., 2025).

Religious radicalism represents a critical and escalating threat within both national and global contexts. It poses significant challenges for societies and governments worldwide (Humaidi et al., 2024; Umar et al., 2024), necessitating comprehensive strategies that integrate education, interfaith engagement, and coherent public policy responses. Addressing religious extremism requires tackling its structural root causes, including poverty, social injustice, and political instability (Bol, 2023). Effective mitigation therefore demands not only reactive measures but also a nuanced understanding of the socio-political environments in which radical ideologies emerge. Through sustained cooperation and shared commitment across sectors, the adverse consequences of extremism can be reduced, fostering more tolerant and peaceful societies despite substantial obstacles. Indonesia formally recognizes six official religions and guarantees freedom of worship for their adherents (Idris et al., 2024; Latifa et al., 2022; Ma'arif et al., 2022; Kementerian Agama RI, 2019a). Religious matters frequently intersect with political discourse and policy negotiation. According to the 2010 census conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Indonesia's population comprises approximately 87.18% Muslims, 6.96% Protestants, 2.91% Catholics, 1.69% Hindus, 0.72% Buddhists, and 0.05% Confucians. These figures reflect substantial religious diversity. While Bali is predominantly Hindu, East Nusa Tenggara is largely Christian, illustrating regional variations in religious composition. Social indicators suggest that religious tolerance in Indonesia remains relatively strong, as reflected in the public recognition of diverse religious holidays and the presence of multiple places of worship. Nevertheless, instances of bigotry and religion-based prejudice persist, highlighting the need for ongoing efforts to strengthen inter-religious understanding. Religious diversity continues to shape public policy and political processes within Indonesia (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019b; Tayeb & Weiss, 2024).

Consequently, the government has undertaken measures to reintroduce and strengthen religious instruction within state schools. Policymakers and authorities across various contexts increasingly recognize that religion cannot be treated solely as a private matter; rather, it constitutes a public concern with social and political implications (Budiharso et al., 2023; Carmody, 2010; Kementerian Agama RI, 2019a; Tayeb & Weiss, 2024). However, the global revival of religious education does not imply convergence towards uniform development strategies. Historical trajectories, political systems, and socio-cultural contexts significantly influence how new

religious education policies are formulated and implemented. The motivations for incorporating religious instruction into state curricula vary across countries, shaped by distinct national priorities and societal conditions (Idris et al., 2024; Latifa et al., 2022; Ma'arif et al., 2022). In the contemporary era, religious pluralism is undergoing substantial transformation under the influence of global trends such as secularization, demographic shifts among religious communities, and broader political and economic changes. These dynamics underscore the continuing relevance of research into religious education and inter-religious engagement (Hamdanah, 2022; 2024; Ma'arif et al., 2022; Tri et al., 2026). In plural societies, disengagement from religious diversity may result in social marginalization. Without efforts to understand other faith traditions, individuals and communities risk not only misunderstanding others but also limiting their own self-understanding within a shared social context.

Inter-religious education has been progressively developed within state schools; however, systematic and well-defined practices of inter-religious instruction within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) remain limited. Empirical evidence regarding how inter-religious instruction is operationalized in *pesantren* settings remains insufficient, constituting a central research gap that this study seeks to address. Beyond fostering understanding of other faith traditions, the acceptance of religious plurality is equally essential. Religious plurality acknowledges the coexistence of diverse religious traditions within society (Umar et al., 2024), and its acceptance supports the broader recognition of religious freedom. Within pluralistic contexts, cultivating inter-religious dialogue becomes imperative (Maiden, 2024). Accordingly, religious education curricula should incorporate structured engagement with religious plurality in order to promote tolerance, mutual respect, and intercultural understanding among different religious communities. Through such educational approaches, students can develop the competencies necessary to coexist peacefully within diverse societies (Latifa et al., 2022). Although *pesantren* leaders have traditionally demonstrated tolerance in broader social contexts, formalized inter-religious instructional practices and structured interfaith dialogue remain underexplored, highlighting a significant gap between practice and curricular articulation. The significance of inter-religious education lies in its relationship with broader religious teaching and its potential to address extremism and radicalization. Research indicates that religious education intersects with issues such as radical attitudes, preventive strategies against extremism, and implications for democracy, youth identity, and state ideology (Azra & Afrianty, 2005; Bonino, 2018; Decker & Pyrooz, 2019). Radical

movements often emerge from selective or distorted interpretations of religious texts and doctrines, which may be utilized to legitimize exclusivist ideologies and mobilize students toward particular socio-political agendas, including reactions to perceived social or economic inequalities. The influence of radical movements can be observed in the rhetoric of influential figures, in youth intolerance, in students' responses to religious diversity, and in ideological challenges to the foundational principles of the state (Moyaert, 2005; Nganga et al., 2025). Preventive measures undertaken by governments and educational stakeholders include monitoring and restricting access to online content promoting radical ideologies, as well as dissolving organizations that actively propagate extremist movements (Abbas, 2007; Schmidt, 2021).

Interreligious tensions in Indonesia are particularly visible in relations between Christianity and Islam, although tensions also occur among other religious communities (Idris et al., 2024). Divergent perspectives exist among Indonesian teachers regarding the scope and purpose of religious education. Debates persist over whether religious literacy should be incorporated into school curricula, with some arguing that Muslim teachers should not teach about other religions, while others strongly advocate for comparative and inter-religious instruction. Religion remains a sensitive and politically charged subject, frequently associated with political contestation, conflict, and intense public debate. Consequently, reluctance persists in attributing intolerance to religious illiteracy (Latifa et al., 2022; Ma'arif et al., 2022). Inter-religious education in Indonesia plays a significant role in fostering tolerance within a diverse and multicultural society, strengthening social cohesion, and reducing religious conflict. It serves as a mechanism for countering extremism, promoting peaceful coexistence consistent with the national philosophy of Pancasila, and supporting the broader objectives of the national education system, which emphasize respect for pluralism (Cornille, 2008; Patel, 2016). Contemporary research on inter-religious education influencing policy focuses on enhancing social cohesion, promoting religious moderation to mitigate extremism, and transitioning from mono-religious approaches to inclusive, dialogue-oriented curricula. Core areas of inquiry include evaluating teacher training programs, encouraging active student participation in interfaith dialogue, and developing multicultural educational policies (Smith, 2015; Willy, 1996). Despite these developments, empirical research on interfaith literacy remains limited, revealing a significant gap in evidence concerning the practical implementation of inter-religious instruction. In order to prevent the spread of radical ideologies among young people and safeguard national stability, it is essential to strengthen preventive

initiatives (Karell & Freedman, 2019), including the structured introduction of inter-religious education within Islamic boarding schools.

In Indonesia, inter-religious instruction is formally regulated under Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023 as part of a broader framework for strengthening religious moderation. Religious moderation emphasizes process, attitude, and behavioral orientation that reflect a balanced or middle path—avoiding both extreme rigidity associated with radicalism and extreme relativism associated with excessive liberalism. It represents an effort to promote social harmony by cultivating tolerance, mutual respect, anti-bullying values, and collective responsibility (Misirhiralall & Soules, 2025). The overarching objective is to foster peace, human unity, and the preservation of spiritual, religious, and cultural values. Moderation is implemented through educational initiatives, constructive religious preaching, active community engagement, and the family as the foundational institution for value formation (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019a; Rido & Maswani, 2025; Zuhairansyah, 2014). Inter-religious instruction, as articulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2025), frames religious moderation as a perspective, attitude, and religious practice grounded in balance and justice. It rejects both extreme right (radical and rigid) and extreme left (liberal and disparaging) positions, seeking instead to uphold human dignity and the public good within a multicultural society. Religious moderation reinforces national commitment to the foundational principles of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). It further promotes tolerance, non-violence, and respect for local traditions as essential components of harmonious coexistence (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019a; Rido & Maswani, 2025).

Religious moderation contributes significantly to the prevention of radicalization by promoting inclusive religious education that reduces extremism and fosters harmony within diverse societies. Research indicates that curriculum transformation within inter-religious contexts facilitates a transition from mono-religious instruction towards inter-religious education, enabling students to engage with diverse perspectives, including both auto-perspectives (understanding one's own tradition) and allo-perspectives (understanding others' traditions) (Japar et al., 2025; Mosher, 2022). Moreover, studies on interfaith dialogue within citizenship education demonstrate its capacity to strengthen civil society, encourage active student participation, and enhance interfaith competence among educators. Such findings highlight the necessity of adapting national educational policies to more accurately reflect religious diversity, alongside implementing school-

based initiatives that promote interaction and dialogue rather than segregation. These areas of research are vital for developing policies that cultivate trust, mutual understanding, and social cohesion within pluralistic and often politically sensitive educational environments (Parker & Gill, 2021).

Inter-religious instruction in Indonesia is grounded in Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023 and is framed within the broader concept of religious moderation. The term moderation signifies balance—standing firmly without excess or extremity. Its primary objective is to promote peace, strengthen unity among humanity, and safeguard spiritual, religious, and cultural values from deterioration. Religious moderation is implemented through educational initiatives, constructive preaching, active religious engagement, and the family as the foundational sphere of value formation. Core moderation values include tolerance, rejection of terrorism and violence, commitment to national principles, respect for local customs, and openness to differences in religious interpretation (Latifa et al., 2022; Kementerian Agama RI, 2019a; Ma'arif et al., 2022). Within the context of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), leadership plays a crucial role in implementing inter-religious instruction. Instructional leadership in *pesantren* is characterized by a charismatic and holistic approach that prioritizes the enhancement of teaching quality and student learning. This leadership model integrates pedagogical guidance with deeply rooted spiritual values, extending beyond conventional administrative management. It emphasizes role modelling, curriculum development, and the cultivation of an academic climate that is both conducive and grounded in religious principles (Latifa et al., 2022; Ma'arif et al., 2022). The leadership of the *kiyai* (Ma'arif, 2022) is centered on moral and spiritual authority, active pedagogical mentorship, character formation (*akhlak*), the bridging of modernity and tradition, and a close, emotionally engaged approach with students. In practice, charismatic leadership intersects with instructional leadership to facilitate the implementation of inter-religious instruction. Athoillah et al. (2023) and Ma'arif et al. (2022) highlight several essential elements of *kiyai* charismatic-instructional leadership as follows:

- In *uswah hasanah*, the *kiyai* serves as a moral exemplar for teachers and students through conduct, integrity, and spiritual authenticity, rather than relying solely on formal authority.
- Active pedagogical guidance: The *kiyai* participates directly in curriculum development, supervises instructional practices, and establishes clear educational goals for students.

- Character development (*akhlaq*): Student character formation is nurtured through a “loving parent” educational atmosphere combined with continuous spiritual mentorship.
- Integrating modernity and tradition: The *kiyai* harmonises classical Islamic scholarship (*Kitab Kuning*) with contemporary pedagogical approaches, utilizing technology as a supportive tool for religious, moral, and spiritual learning rather than as a replacement for traditional values.
- Relational approach: Leadership is grounded in close, personal, and emotionally engaged relationships with teachers and students, fostering loyalty, intrinsic motivation, and a strong sense of communal belonging.

In the framework of religious moderation, what is moderated are the perspectives and attitudes of adherents, not the core teachings of the religion itself. Religious moderation emphasizes justice and balance, grounded in fundamental principles that ensure religion contributes to peace and social harmony. Within the education sector, religious moderation is operationalized through the Love-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta*, KBC), an educational initiative introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2025). The primary objective of KBC is to cultivate scholars who embody noble character and moral integrity, rather than focusing solely on cognitive achievement, while instilling strong humanitarian values. The curriculum seeks to shape students’ character through the cultivation of empathy, compassion, and tolerance. The foundational pillars of KBC are encapsulated in the concept of *Panca Cinta* (Five Loves):

- Love for Allah SWT and His Messenger: Fostering compassion and emulation of exemplary conduct.
- Love for Knowledge: Viewing knowledge as illumination and guidance.
- Love for the Environment: Respecting and preserving nature as a divine trust.
- Love for Self and Others: Nurturing empathy, self-compassion, and mental wellbeing.
- Love for the Homeland: Encouraging responsible citizenship and nationalism as an expression of faith.

KBC emphasizes the role of educators as role models who demonstrate affective, patient, and respectful attitudes toward students’ uniqueness, rather than merely transferring knowledge. It is implemented in Islamic schools and religious educational institutions to address social conflict and discrimination, fostering inclusive spaces for growth (Rido & Maswani, 2025).

Problem Statement

The context of this study is interreligious education in the boarding schools of *Shofa Marwa Jember*. Inter-religious instruction in this research associates Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) from the Ministry of Religious Affairs that implements in Islamic schools and religious educational institutions to address social conflict and discrimination, creating inclusive growth spaces. Grounded in principles of tolerance, pluralism, and interfaith dialogue, inter-religious instruction promotes values of tolerance within Indonesia's diverse and multicultural society, strengthens social cohesion, and mitigates religious conflict (Willy, 1996; Cornille, 2008). The broader purpose of inter-religious education is to counter extremism, encourage peaceful coexistence aligned with the national philosophy of *Pancasila*, and support the objectives of the national education system in fostering respect for pluralism (Patel, 2016). Within this study, inter-religious education is examined in relation to general religious teaching, particularly in addressing extreme and radical attitudes, developing preventive strategies to reduce radicalization, and considering its impact on democracy, youth attitudes, and state ideology (Athoillah et al., 2023; Bonino, 2018; Decker & Pyrooz, 2019). The curriculum framework emphasizes teaching materials that facilitate dialogue and interaction across religious traditions beyond Islam, encouraging engagement with diverse value systems. The implementation of inter-religious instruction is closely linked to the charismatic leadership of the *kiyai*, who serves both as leader and proprietor of the pesantren. Charismatic leadership aligns with the aims of inter-religious instruction; however, tensions may emerge when perceived moral values create challenges for institutional management. To date, inter-religious education within pesantren has been implemented in a limited and restricted manner. This study addresses the empirical gap by examining curriculum design elements—specifically learning outcomes, teaching materials, pedagogical methods, and assessment strategies—related to inter-religious practices within the pesantren context.

Conflicts, particularly interreligious conflicts, present ongoing challenges for Indonesia in its efforts to cultivate an inclusive and equitable society. This article seeks to reorganize the discourse surrounding interreligious tensions in Indonesia by drawing upon relevant conceptual perspectives in order to clarify the precise role and positioning of religion within religious and interreligious conflicts in the national context. Furthermore, this study aims to contribute meaningful academic insight into interreligious tensions through the development of an inter-religious curriculum designed to foster mutual respect, deeper understanding, and peaceful coexistence. This approach

moves beyond monological religious instruction towards dialogical engagement, emphasizing the reduction of prejudice through informed knowledge of diverse faith traditions. To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What forms of inter-religious education practices are potentially developed within the curriculum design of Shofa Marwa Islamic boarding school?
2. How is inter-religious-based education elaborated within the Shofa Marwa curriculum design to reflect and promote characteristics of moderation and tolerance?

Methods

Design

This research adopts a hermeneutic phenomenological design as its qualitative methodological framework. Creswell and Poth (2017) explain that hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to analyze individuals' lived experiences in order to understand the meaning of a phenomenon within its specific context, acknowledging that the researcher's interpretative role is integral and inevitably shaped by prior understandings. This approach is particularly suitable for curriculum inquiry, as it enables exploration of the lived, contextual, and often implicit experiences of students and educators within the educational lifeworld. It facilitates examination of how the curriculum is actually experienced and perceived—the “lived curriculum”—and highlights the potential gap between the intended curriculum and the realities encountered by students and teachers. More specifically, this study utilizes Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore in depth the complex and affective dimensions of personal experience, particularly in relation to participants' perceptions of a newly implemented curriculum and inter-religious teaching approach. IPA enables comprehensive examination of how a relatively homogeneous group interprets a significant shared experience, emphasizing individual meaning-making while identifying common thematic patterns across participants.

Study Participants

The participants in this study consist of eight individuals, including teachers, the principal of the boarding school, and the head of the foundation. Of the eight participants, five are men (*ustadz*) and three are women (*ustadzah*). All participants are senior educators with between eight and 10 years of teaching experience within the pesantren. They were purposively selected based on their

specific and relevant experience with the phenomenon under investigation. Table 1 summarizes the demography of the study participants.

Table 1

Demography of study participants

| No | Participants | Gender | F | % |
|----|--------------------|--------|----|-----|
| 1 | Uztad | Male | 5 | 50 |
| 2 | Ustadjah | Female | 3 | 30 |
| 3 | Prinpical | Male | 1 | 10 |
| 4 | Head of Foundation | Male | 1 | 10 |
| | | | 10 | 100 |

Tools to Data Collection

Tools to data collection of this study include observation guide, interview guide and FGD guide each of which is described below.

Observation guide

This study employs an observational guide of narrative and field notes. The observation has an open-ended structure, facilitating comprehensive and descriptive notes of auditory or visual stimuli. Table 2 presents the observation guide utilized in this investigation.

Table 2

Observation Guide: Classroom Activity

Observer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Target Students: _____ Activity: Group Project Work

| Focus Area | Observation Points | Notes/Evidence |
|---------------------------|--|----------------|
| Engagement | When do students begin their classes? Are they focusing on the task at hand? | |
| Interaction | How exactly do they work together? Who are initiating to speak, listen or create conversation? | |
| Methods | Where do they get their solutions from? Which tools do they make use of? Do they cooperate each other to resolve the problems? | |
| Environment | Are the materials easy to access by each student? Is the classroom noisy? Is the classroom climate comfortable to study the inter-religious concepts? | |
| Teaching materials | How are themes that include multiple religions presented? Are the instructional materials on issues related to interreligious relations simple enough for students to comprehend? How do students react in terms of their preferred modes of learning? | |

Interview Guide

An interview guide is a systematic document or script utilized by interviewers to outline essential themes, inquiries, and probing points to address during an interview. This study uses semi-structured interview to collect data. The interview guide is used to guarantee consistency, equity, and efficiency among applicants or study participants, facilitating structured, semi-structured, or comprehensive dialogues (Table 3). A semi-structured interview is a way to get qualitative data. It has both set open-ended questions and the freedom to talk about other things, so it can flow like a chat. Researchers can find out more about people's ideas, feelings, and beliefs by using an interview guide, which is a list of important themes.

Table 3

Interview Guide

| No | Stages | Duration | Queries |
|----|------------------------------------|------------|---|
| 1 | Introduction & Rapport Building | 2-5 mins | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greet the candidate and introduce yourself. 2. Provide a brief overview of the role of your topic in inter-religious instruction. 3. Set the agenda and mention the estimated time. 4. <i>Question</i>: "Tell me a little about yourself and your background?" |
| 2 | Experience & Technical Questions | 10-15 mins | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What attracted you to inter-religious instruction in accordance to Love-Based Curriculum, moderation and tolerance to attract religious competence?" 2. Describe your experience how you design inter-religious curriculum, inter-religious instruction to implement love-based curriculum in your instructions 3. What are the primary responsibilities in your current role in inter-religious instruction? |
| 3 | Behavioral & Situational Questions | 20-30 mins | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on past behaviors to predict future performance. 2. <i>Question</i>: "Tell me about a time when you had to prepare teaching materials in inter-religious instruction, curriculum design, and teaching in the classroom. How did you prioritize?" "Describe topics you deem proper to design inter-religious activities at school and in the social community". "How do you exemplify inter-religious instruction that show moderate, tolerance, and Islamic values to your students?" |
| 4 | Closing & Candidate Questions | 5-10 mins | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allow the candidate to ask questions. 2. Outline next steps and timeline. 3. Thank the candidate. |

FGD Guide

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide is a framework for doing qualitative research that is typically in the form of an interview script or topic list (Table 4). It is utilized by a moderator to facilitate conversations with small groups consisting of eight to twelve individuals. It assists in the collection of in-depth insights, community viewpoints, or comments in a manner that is systematic and consistent, frequently covering major subjects, open-ended questions, and suggested probes.

Table 4

FGD Guide

| No | Stages | Duration | Queries |
|----|--|------------|---|
| 1 | Introduction ○ | 5-10 mins | 1. Welcome, moderator introduction, and purpose. 2. Set ground rules: Confidentiality, no right/wrong answers, everyone's view matters. 3. Consent form review. |
| 2 | Icebreaker | 5 mins | Simple introduction: "Let's start by introducing ourselves..." |
| | Opening Question | 10 mins | General question to get participants talking about the topic. |
| 4 | Key Discussion Questions & Probes | 40-60 mins | 3–5 core questions exploring the topic, followed by probes to get more detail (e.g., "Why do you think that?", "Can you give an example?") |
| 5 | Closing Question | 5-10 mins | Are there any final thoughts you want to share about [topic]?" |
| 6 | Thank You & Closing | | Appreciation for their time and explanation of next steps (e.g., reporting). |

Protocol of Document Analysis

The document analysis protocol (Table 5) is a five-step, systematic procedure that involves the following: defining objectives, sourcing/selecting documents, assessing authenticity, coding themes, and interpreting findings to ensure validity. It necessitates the establishment of a transparent, rigorous framework for qualitative data extraction, which frequently involves data triangulation to mitigate bias and verify findings.

Table 5

Key Components Checklist of Document analysis

| Component | Description |
|------------------------|--|
| Objective | Two research questions of this study are clearly stated. |
| Search Strategy | Documents, such as teaching materials in pesantren, Love-based curriculum, religious moderation guide issued by Minster of Religious |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | Affair, syllabus in inter-religious, and secondary documents are selected from various sources. |
| Selection Criteria | Themes of inter-religious teaching materials, activities to support moderate religious, best practices in inter-religious collaboration, pesantren-based criteria defined by the Kiyai and board of pesantren are defined |
| Data Extraction | A table to organize excerpts. |
| Analysis Method | Thematic or content analysis techniques. |

Data Collection

Data is collected through multiple instruments, including observation, semi-structured interviews, FGD, and document analysis. Observations were conducted to examine daily teaching practices of *ustadz* and *ustadzah*, particularly to confirm how inter-religious education, interfaith engagement, and dialogical practices are implemented in classroom settings. To explore the curriculum design supporting inter-religious practices, semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes were conducted with each participant. In addition, a 95-minute FGD was organized to facilitate in-depth exploration of inter-religious values within the curriculum. Given the relatively small number of participants, the FGD enabled intensive and reflective discussion regarding curriculum development and instructional practices. Document analysis is used complimentary to complete the data based on themes that fix to the data from observation, interview and FGD.

Data Analysis

Data analysis combined content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2018). The analytical procedures followed five stages: (1) converting numerical data and textual materials into narrative form; (2) identifying themes aligned with the research questions; (3) coding data according to the prescribed research questions; (4) applying and refining the coding framework across all data sets; and (5) selecting and verifying the final data for interpretation. In addition, adopting Krippendorff (2018) data is analyzed in six stages: Following Krippendorff (2018), the content analysis will go through: (1) unitizing, (2) sampling, (3) coding, (4) reducing the data, (5) inferring, and (6) narrating.

Trustworthiness of data is conducted through: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility means that someone can be trusted, believed in, and thought to be worthy of trust. It includes both sincerity and ability.

To gain credibility, you need to act in a consistent, honest, and high-quality way, and your skill must be proven. Dependability means being honest, dependable, consistent and study process is stable. Transferability refers to how easy it is to move, give, or exchange something is called its transferability, movement, or exchangeability. Confirmability makes sure that results come from participant data and not the researcher's own preferences.

To ensure trustworthiness, credibility (internal validity) was established through triangulation, member checking, and prolonged observation. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trust is established through four key criteria. Credibility (truth value) focuses on whether the data represents a true, accurate, and valid picture of the phenomenon. Credibility is gained via triangulation (using multiple methods/sources) and member checks. Transferability (applicability) assesses if the findings can be applied to other contexts. This is achieved by providing "thick descriptions" of research procedures to determine if results fit other scenarios. Dependability (consistency) highlights that data is consistent and can be replicated, often documented through an audit trail of research steps. In addition, confirmability or neutrality ensures the findings are based on the participants' input and research, not the researcher's biases (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness evaluation frameworks have been basically built around integrity, quality, reputation systems, and the provenance of data. We explain the previous efforts categorizing these four aspects. In general, frameworks for evaluating trustworthiness have been constructed with integrity, quality, reputation systems, and the provenance of data as their primary organizing principles (Dai, et., al., 2008). Dependability (external validity) was strengthened through collective verification during the FGD process. Transferability (internal reliability) and confirmability (external reliability) were supported through thick description and documentation of FGD discussions.

Results

The results of the study are based on observations, 45-minute semi-structured interviews, and FGD discussions. Document analysis—including the curriculum, teaching materials, government regulations, and school curriculum framework—is integrated into the findings, along with the *kiyai*'s role as a leadership model.

RQ1: What forms of inter-religious education practices are potentially developed within the curriculum design of Shofa Marwa Islamic boarding school?

Results of interviews and FGD indicate themes centered on adherence to Islamic moral foundations, national values, and core Islamic teachings. In addition, inclusiveness, characterized by moderation, tolerance, and multi-perspective understanding, emerges as a fundamental principle. A sound inter-religious curriculum should teach students to appreciate the “other” while deepening understanding of their own faith. The foundation of interfaith cooperation is grounded in the hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Islam is viewed within the pesantren as one faith among others, and tolerance toward followers of other religions is a recognized characteristic of pesantren life. The *wasatiyah* attitude is understood and practiced in the religious life of the pesantren community. The three pillars of Islamic moderation are tolerance (*tasamuh*), justice (*‘adalah*), and balance (*tawazun*). The key criteria of an inter-religious curriculum include: dialogue and interaction, multi-perspective learning, active tolerance and moderation, intellectual and ethical focus, universal values, contextual relevance, and competence-based inter-religious learning.

“To view dialogue and interaction, participants emphasize that the main method of interreligious practice is dialogue, allowing people of different religions to work together to understand one another. Methods that reject or marginalize other religions are not used. We connect our own religion with other traditions to build understanding, moving away from mono-religious and dogmatic approaches.”

Results of observation indicate that *ustadz* experience challenges in implementing inter-religious practices through dialogue in the classroom. As stated by Ustadz 1:

“I got problem to share tolerance and inclusiveness because I taught *nahwu shorof*. I can freely discuss with santri (students) when I teach hadith and Al-Qur’an where the theme is inter-religious tolerance.”

The second theme emerging from interviews and FGD is multi-perspective learning. Participants explained that santri gain knowledge about various religions from both internal and external perspectives, which helps reduce stereotypes.

“Multi-perspective learning means seeing from various points of view. Santri should be tolerant in receiving others’ opinions, not fanatical, and not assuming that their own opinion is the most correct.”

The third discovery promotes the principles of active tolerance and moderation. In this manner, the curriculum design underscores the importance of moderate character that is not extreme, respects diversity, and fosters harmony in society. The fourth finding concerns intellectual and

ethical focus, emphasizing moral education, humanistic values, and critical thinking about different religions. The fifth result relates to shared universal values, focusing on common ground among different faiths, mutual cooperation, and shared humanity. The sixth finding is contextual relevance, meaning the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs and realities of students in a pluralistic society. Finally, competence-based education seeks to build “interreligious competence,” enabling students to understand, engage with, and interact constructively with people from different religions. A summary of the characteristics of inter-religious practices is presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Characteristics of Inter-Religious Practices

| No | Characteristics | Definition |
|----|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Dialog and interaction | Open dialogue of different religions work, understand each other |
| 2 | Multi-perspective learning | Knowledge on various religions perspectives, reducing and combating stereotypes |
| 3 | Active tolerance and moderation | Moderate curriculum design, moderate characters, respect diversity, and harmony in society |
| 4 | Intellectual and ethical focus | Emphasis on moral education, humanistic ideals, and thinking critically about different religions |
| 5 | Universal values | Focuses people different faiths, collaboration, humanity |
| 6 | Contextual relevance | Pluralistic society, and local-based situation |
| 7 | Competence-based | Understand, interact with people from different religions |

According to the findings of this study, there are two types of boarding school programs: pesantren and diniyah. In pesantren, santri are taught exclusively Islamic texts such as the Al-Qur’an, Al-Hadith, *nahwu*, and *shorof*, without general school subjects. In contrast, santri in the diniyah program study Islamic texts similarly to those in pesantren but also learn general subjects offered in public schools, including citizenship, Pancasila, mathematics, English, social sciences, chemistry, and physics, and they are organized into elementary and secondary levels. In pesantren, interreligious learning is delivered through integration within specific topics in the Qur’an and Hadith that address interreligious issues, resulting in relatively limited frequency. In the diniyah program, interreligious learning can be introduced more freely and regularly because general school subjects are taught every day.

Findings from interviews and focus group discussions reveal that interreligious education employs diverse pedagogical approaches and resources. Methods include seminars and discussions featuring speakers from various religions—such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and others—conducted in regular forums held monthly or biweekly. “Pesantren and diniyah invite

clergy or educators from other faiths to engage in discussions regarding theological differences, humanitarian values, religious tolerance, and interfaith unity.” This education may be delivered through public lectures open to students at all levels or organized independently within the pesantren or diniyah program. Interreligious content is divided into theoretical and practical components and is designed to be taught regularly at each level, such as Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA). Throughout the program, santri are introduced to theories of religious comparison, tolerance, liberation, and unity within religious plurality. The material may be delivered by an *ustadz* or *ustadzah* from the pesantren, and occasionally by a priest or instructor from another religion. Discussions also address the prevention of terrorism, excessive fanaticism, and teachings that divide the nation, while affirming that for each believer, their own religion is considered the best doctrine.

Interreligious learning practices may also be implemented through self-study. Santri are sent to participate in national seminars, or the pesantren invites resource persons to conduct such seminars. Afterward, santri prepare reports and analyze the seminar materials. They may also be assigned directly to community settings, such as government agencies, where they interact with people from diverse religious backgrounds. This direct engagement enables santri to experience plural society firsthand, fostering tolerance and maintaining social harmony. In relation to the role of the *kiyai* as pesantren leader, the study finds that both charismatic and instructional leadership are practiced. Exemplary *akhlak*, morality, tolerance, moderation, relational approach, and accountability are central to the *kiyai*'s leadership model in supporting inter-religious instruction. As is customary in pesantren, the *kiyai* plays a decisive role in policy and procedural decisions grounded in ethical values. Participants noted that although certain responsibilities are delegated to *ustadz* and principals, final decisions remain under the *kiyai*'s authority.

“First, principals and *ustadz* hold a meeting and resolve the problems; the principal then reports the results of the *ustadz* deliberation to the *kiyai*. In cases where disagreement or conflict arises, the final decision is made by the *kiyai*, and *ustadz* comply as a manifestation of etiquette, respect, and obedience.” Respect, proper conduct, and reverence are emphasized, as the *kiyai* serves not only as a teacher and adviser but also as a spiritual guide ensuring that learning is transformative for the soul as well as informative.

The role of the *kiyai*, grounded in *uswah hasanah*, *akhlak*, and an interpersonal approach, serves as a role model for the entire pesantren community.

“In *uswah hasanah*, practical example in delivering good lessons, morality, and real accountability are the cornerstone values for all pesantren members. Therefore, the leadership model should be integrated into inter-religious instruction.”

RQ 2: How is inter-religious-based education elaborated within the Shofa Marwa curriculum design to reflect and promote characteristics of moderation and tolerance?

Answers to the second research question are derived from document analysis combined with interview and FGD results. The findings are classified into teaching goals and teaching methods, both supporting inter-religious instruction. Regarding teaching goals, participants perceive the term “mono-religious strategy” as representing the traditional purpose of Islamic teaching; within an interreligious framework, this approach is transformed into one that is inclusive, pluralistic, and respectful to promote religious moderation and counter extremism. Interviews and FGD indicate that inter-religious education emphasizes strategies to promote diversity and eliminate bias. Inter-religious practices operate through peace-building dialogue, inclusive curricula, and shared experiences. Effective methods include classroom discussions on shared values, interfaith workshops, studying multiple religious perspectives, and celebrating religious festivals together.

Participants consider that awareness of inter-religious teaching has been well established. According to them, inter-religious education introduces individuals to various religions through dialogue, tolerance, and mutual understanding. Methods include comparison of religions, visits to places of worship, and shared learning experiences. In the classroom, approaches involve cross-cultural lessons, interfaith workshops, collaborative community initiatives, and examining similarities in religious texts.

“These teachings emphasize personal approaches, such as building friendships and using interactive methods. Teaching is not merely a comparison of doctrines; it includes the use of universal language and shared values like justice and peace to foster mutual understanding.”

There are teaching models to consider regarding how inter-religious instruction is delivered, based on interview and document analysis. Exploration from interviews and FGD reveals six models for teaching inter-religious education as follows:

1. Interfaith classroom curricula
2. Educational field trips to worship places
3. Teaching for tolerance workshop
4. Interreligious literacy learning

5. Theological exchange and comparative study
6. Joint commemoration of holidays

Our findings indicate that in interfaith classroom curricula, “teachers provide instruction on various religions from the perspective of their practitioners (*allo-perspective*), rather than solely from their own viewpoint. For example, a teacher may facilitate discussion on how different religions have contributed to history, such as Islamic contributions to science and Christian contributions to art.”

“Programs in this session are delivered through *sarasehan*, discussions, and ‘Ngopi Pagi Bareng Pesantren’ (Morning Coffee with Pesantren). The sessions are conducted either face-to-face or via online live streaming.”

Participants in the FGD also highlighted student field trips, tolerance-based worship learning, joint holiday celebrations, interreligious literacy, theological exchange and comparative study, and joint commemoration of holidays. In educational visits to houses of worship, santri are given opportunities to learn directly from religious leaders, promoting a “learning by doing” approach. Student field trips in the diniyah program are conducted once each semester. In interreligious instruction, such visits are used to explore tolerance, harmony, and prevention of intolerant behavior. In Bali, where the majority of citizens are Hindu, Muhammadiyah schoolchildren are invited to churches or temples for social gatherings and communal dialogue. Within the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) tradition, student field trips are also held once each semester as part of *tadabur alam* (reflection on nature).

In interreligious instruction, field trips are used to explore tolerance, harmony, and the prevention of intolerant behavior. In Bali, schoolchildren are taken to churches or temples for social gatherings and communal dialogue. In the NU tradition, Banser (Indonesian Youth Movement) guards churches, temples, and other places of worship during major events such as Christmas and New Year to demonstrate solidarity and tolerance in preventing terrorism. FGD participants also noted that in “teaching for tolerance” workshops, educators use real social issues as case studies to stimulate dialogue among students of different religions and promote pluralism, with themes such as domestic violence and social injustice.

“Dialogue-based learning is an educational method that facilitates communication and understanding through workshops, open forums, and small group discussions. Experience

and appreciation of diversity can be developed by observing or participating in the religious rituals and celebrations of different faiths.”

Inter-religious literacy is implemented as a program to counter radicalization by encouraging students to engage directly with members of different faith communities, thereby reducing misconceptions. In theological exchange and comparative study, pesantren organize seminars that examine similar themes across religions, such as the concept of peace in the Qur’an, the Bible, the Vedas, and other sacred texts.

“Comparative study or multifaith education examines different religions within the same classroom, typically by focusing on shared values or teachings. In Trialogical Learning, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions are explored together, emphasizing cooperation and mutual respect through constructive dialogue.”

Finally, participation in joint holiday celebrations remains a matter of differing views. Pesantren may arrange for students to observe or learn about religious holidays of other faiths, such as Christmas, Eid, or Diwali, to foster familiarity and mutual understanding.

“Islamic perspectives on religious holidays such as Christmas and Nyepi vary; one view permits participation, while another prohibits it. The pesantren’s role is to present these differences and explain them to santri within the framework of *hablum minannas*, emphasizing human relations, tolerance, and harmony.”

The inter-religious instruction clearly promotes specific aims, targets, and teaching methods. The implementation of inter-religious instruction is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7
Practices of Inter-Religious Instruction

| No | | Method | Aim |
|----|--|-------------------------|--|
| 1 | Inter-religious education practices | Dialog-Based Learning | Promote communication and understanding through workshops, forums, and small group conversations. |
| 2 | Comparative Study/Multifaith Education | Faith-based dialogue | Look at different religions in the same classroom, usually by focusing on ideals or teachings that are shared |
| 3 | Inter-faith dialogue | Parallel Dialogue Model | -Understand others’ values and perspectives -Attend or participate in other religions’ holidays and rites to celebrate diversity. |
| 4 | Inter-religious literacy | Parallel Dialogue Model | - Attempts to bring together people of different religious backgrounds -Positive dialogue between Jewish, Christian, and other religions, and Islamic trialogical learning through working together and respecting each other |

Discussion and Conclusion

Our analysis indicates that inter-religious education encompasses interfaith engagement and dialogue. It shows instructional values that include dialogue and interaction, multi-perspective learning, active tolerance and moderation, intellectual and ethical emphasis, universal values, contextual relevance, and competence-based approaches. These inter-religious practices are reflected in various instructional strategies that promote acceptance of moderate ideals. The introduction of religious moderation and the Love-Based Curriculum is therefore significant. Our findings show that Islamic values form the foundation of inter-religious instruction. This study corroborates Islamic theories by demonstrating that the values of moderation are implemented through the concept of *ummatah wasathan*—the middle path or moderate principle—referring to Muslims who adhere to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Q.S. al-Baqarah/2:143). To cultivate self-awareness in responding to contemporary challenges, religious moderation must be internalized within the individual psyche. Nirwani Jumala emphasized that religious moderation should become a personal disposition encompassing attitudes, emotions, expressions, and reasoning. Moderation in thought affects moderation in religious practice. A moderation mindset fosters self-awareness, commitment to personal growth, character development, and intellectual advancement (Sumarna et al., 2022). The values of *tasamuh*, pluralism, and Islamic *ukhuwah*, which prioritize unity and integrity of the *ummah*, are sustained through Islamic moderation (Rasyid, 2014).

We found that inter-religious instruction reflects the development of religious literacy (Hermawan et al., 2025). Religious literacy includes knowledge of different religions, critical thinking about religious issues, and constructive interfaith communication. This study supports Soules and Misirhiralall's (2025) argument that religious literacy is essential for social cohesion, tolerance, and democracy in pluralistic, globalized, and digital societies. Although religious literacy is widely acknowledged as important, scholars, educators, and policymakers interpret it differently. Some emphasize intercultural awareness and interfaith engagement (Cadge, 2024), while others focus on doctrinal knowledge and religious teachings (Muhaemin et al., 2023). In an increasingly pluralistic and digitalized world, religious literacy helps counter intolerance, extremism, religious manipulation, and identity polarization. Recent scholarship highlights diversity, identity, and inclusion, positioning religious literacy as a collective societal effort to promote social cohesion and justice (Seiple & Hoover, 2021). It is now recognized as a key component of broader social

initiatives aimed at strengthening collective identity and advancing justice in plural societies. This perspective underscores the importance of empowering individuals to understand, navigate, and respond to religious differences with respect and critical reflection (Liagkis, 2022). The inclusion of inter-religious perspectives in the curricula of pesantren and diniyah further emphasizes the need for inclusive approaches in religious education (Parker & Gill, 2021).

Within this discussion, we find that religious education is not limited to religious institutions alone, but also involves public education systems, communities, and the state in fostering tolerant, open-minded, and multi-perspective environments. Abdullah (2024) affirms that these findings underscore the importance of adopting a civic-oriented approach in religious literacy policy and practice, especially in culturally diverse countries such as Indonesia. A significant issue concerns the limited availability of religious literacy for santri, which remains underemphasized. Challenges in religious literacy education are intensified within pesantren contexts, where the population is predominantly Muslim. Sumarna et al. (2022) note that the pesantren teaching system is highly sensitive to intra-religious diversity, resulting in restricted interfaith dialogue and the persistence of exclusive interpretations that may relate to intolerance.

Our study contends that the findings show inter-religious instruction is systematically elaborated into seven tenets: dialogue and interaction, multi-perspective learning, active tolerance and moderation, intellectual and ethical emphasis, universal values, contextual relevance, and competence-based approaches. This curriculum design equips santri in pesantren and diniyah with religious literacy and inter-religious competence relevant to societal development in the digital era. We affirm that this instructional model aligns with the Love-Based Curriculum (Kementerian Agama RI, 2025), where multi-perspective learning, active tolerance and moderation, and contextual relevance are strongly emphasized (Ramadhan & Hardinah, 2004; Seiple & Hoover, 2021; Umar et al., 2024). The refined Love-Based Curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2025) is structured around five pillars: Love for Allah SWT and His Messenger, Love for Knowledge, Love for the Environment, Love for Self and Others, and Love for the Homeland. These pillars form the foundational principles for promoting tolerance and moderation values consistent with the inter-religious instruction identified in this study.

The second area of emphasis in this discussion concerns how interreligious instruction is delivered. Our findings indicate that four main aspects are emphasized: inter-religious education practices, comparative study or multifaith education, interfaith dialogue, and inter-religious literacy

(Brömssen et al., 2020). The primary objective of these four models is to develop inter-religious literacy in a specific context and broader religious literacy grounded in universal perspectives. We emphasize that interreligious literacy involves the ability to engage, navigate, and interact peacefully with individuals of different religious beliefs, fostering mutual respect and cooperation (Burhanuddin & Baedlowi, 2003). Furthermore, religion is understood as a dynamic and evolving social force, and religious literacy refers to the capacity to understand the core doctrines, practices, and narratives of various religious traditions (Byrne, 2014).

The key terms refer to primary keywords, symbols, doctrines, and narratives of major world religions. This concept emphasizes that religions are internally diverse, not monolithic, and continuously evolving. The main objective is to help individuals understand the cultural, political, and historical contexts in which religion operates, thereby reducing ignorance (Burrirt & Massam, 2020; Maiden, 2024; Misirhiralall & Soules, 2025). This study confirms the findings of Azra and Afrianty (2005) and Hermawan et al. (2025) that the goal of inter-religious instruction is to achieve both inter-religious literacy and broader religious literacy. Furthermore, higher levels of literacy contribute to harmony among different religious adherents, strengthen tolerance, and reduce radical conflict.

Current challenges illustrate how pesantren and diniyah, as foundational institutions of Islamic education, must adapt to literacy competencies. Within the Indonesian Islamic education system, two major instruments are available: religious moderation and the Love-Based Curriculum (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019; 2025; Idris et al., 2024; Ma'arif et al., 2025). Religious moderation guides Muslims in Indonesia to live harmoniously and practice tolerance. However, concerns about radical ideologies persist, as some Islamic institutions express conflict in the name of democracy (Mas'ud, 1989; Mulkhan, 2001; Nasir & Rijal, 2021). In addition, certain pesantren are associated with ideological orientations that align with extremist political views (Nizah, 2016; Nurcholish, 2004; Osman, 2001). Pesantren also face challenges in balancing traditional religious education with contemporary national and digital curricula. These challenges include limited emphasis on practical skills, overloaded and restrictive curricula, inadequate technological infrastructure, and insufficient teacher readiness in lesson planning (Nizah, 2016). Therefore, the implementation of interreligious education identified in this study has the potential to contribute to reform within pesantren institutions.

Our study on the role of the *kiyai* as a model of charismatic-instructional leadership supports the implementation of inter-religious instruction. Research by Nurcholish (2004) and Burhanuddin and Baedlowi (2003) confirms our findings that relevant charismatic leadership values include exemplary teaching, moral integrity, and integration of modernity with tradition. The values closely linked to inter-religious instruction are *tasamuh* (pluralism), *ukhuwah* (unity and integrity), and *umamah* (moderation). This study offers a novel contribution by refining limitations in previous research and adapting inter-religious instruction from theoretical principles into curriculum design and practical teaching strategies that promote harmony and tolerance in daily pesantren life. Accordingly, the findings imply that curriculum management should be strengthened through adaptive curriculum reform grounded in the results of this study.

These findings are not without limitations. The research context is limited to a single pesantren, and the number of participants is relatively small. For future research, curriculum design and instructional strategies could be examined by involving a larger number of participants and broader research settings. We recommend that this study be replicated through a more in-depth case study or a larger-scale experimental design.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the University of Islam Jember and the State Islamic University of KH Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia, for providing academic support and opportunities to conduct this research. All forms of support and assistance are greatly appreciated in the completion of this article.

References

- Abdullah, M. A. (2001). Teaching kalam and theology in the age of diversity: An overview of materials and methods of religious education. *Tashwirul Afkar, Journal of Reflections on Religious and Cultural Thought*, (11), 14.
- Abdullah, M. A. (2024). From dialogue to engagement: experiences of civil society organizations in religious literacy programs for multicultural education curriculum in Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 21(2), 264–274. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v21i2.10234/>
- Athoillah, S., Ashari, M. K., & Alauddin, M. B. (2023). Religious digital literacy of urban Muslim society in Indonesia: A Systematic literature review. *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 28(2), 141. <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v28i2.7088>

- Azra, A., & Afrianty, D. (2005). Pesantren and madrasa: Modernization of Indonesian Moslem society. *Paper Presented Workshop on Madrasaa, Modernity and Islamic Education*. Boston University, CURA, 6.
- Bol, G. (2023). Mary astell on moderation: The case of occasional conformity. *European Legacy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2023.2178725>
- Brömssen, K., Ivkovits, H., & Nixon, G. (2020). Religious literacy in the curriculum in compulsory education in Austria, Scotland and Sweden: A three-country policy comparison. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 41(2), 132–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2020.1737909>
- Budiharso, T., Bakri, S. & Sujito, S. (2023). Transformation of Education System of the Pesantren in Indonesia from the Dutch Colony to Democratic Era. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 14(4), 179-206. <https://jsser.org/index.php/jsser/article/view/5460/646>
- Burhanuddin, J., & Baedlowi, A. (2003). *Transformation of Religious Authority*. Gramedia.
- Burritt, A. M., & Massam, K. T. (2020). Interreligious dialogue, literacy and theologies of storytelling: Australian perspectives. *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 23(4), 265–275. <https://doi.org/10.1111/teth.12554>
- Byrne, C. (2014). Religions education, social inclusion and interreligious literacy in England and Australia. *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*, 27(2), 153–177. <https://doi.org/10.1558/jasr.v27i2.153>
- Cadge, W. (2024). What can chaplains teach about cross-cultural religious literacy? *Review of Faith and International Affairs*, 22(1), 24–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2024.2303278>
- Cornille, Catherine (2008). *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, The Crossroad Publishing Company 2008, xii + 265 p., ISBN 978-0-8245-2464-7.
- Creswell, J. and Poth, C. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Sage.
- Hamdanah, (2023). *Management of Islamic education in the digital era*, Ananta Fidya.
- Hamdanah, (2024). *Reform and innovation in Islamic boarding school*, <https://ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/al-tanzim/article/view/7297>. Accredited Shinta 2
- Hamdanah, (2022) *Quo vadis education administration at Madrasah Diniyah in Indonesia*, <https://journal.staihubbulwathan.id/index.php/alisliah/article/view/2533>. Accredited Shinta 2, ISSN 2087-9490 (p) ISSN 2507-940X (e)

- Hannam, P., Biesta, G., Whittle, S., & Aldridge, D. (2020). Religious literacy: A way forward for religious education. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 41(2), 214–226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2020.1736969>
- Hermawan, W., Supriyadi, T. & Kurniawan, C.S. (2025). Designing a Pedagogical Model for Islamic Legal Literacy and Religious Moderation in Contemporary Digital Contexts. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 16(3), 209-237. <https://jsser.org/index.php/jsser/article/view/6582/747>
- Horikoshi, H. (1987). *Kyai and Social Change*. P3M.
- Humaidi, A., Fadhliyah, N., & Sufirmansyah, S. (2024). The centrality of Kyai in establishing moderate understandings in Salafiyah Pesantren. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i3.3>
- Idris, T., Rijal, F., Irwandi, Hanum, R., & Mardhiah, A. (2024). A multicultural approach in Islamic education learning to strengthen the Islamic identity of moderate students in PTKIN Aceh. *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v5i3.1138>
- Japar, M, Situmorang, R, Hermanto, Siti Muyaroah, Alfani, H, Ma'arif, M and Fitriyani. (2025). Strengthening political tolerance through a digital-based democratic education model at Baturaja University, Indonesia, *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 16 (4), 380-413. <https://jsser.org/index.php/jsser/article/view/6820/765>
- Kementerian Agama RI, K. (2019a). *Implementasi Moderasi Beragama Dalam Pendidikan Islam*. Kelompok Kerja Implmentasi Moderasi Beragama Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia.
- Kementerian Agama RI, K. (2019b). *Moderasi Beragama*. Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI.
- Keputusan Dirjen Pendis Nomor 6077 Tahun 2025 tentang Panduan Kurikulum Berbasis Cinta. (Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 6077 of 2025 concerning the Love-Based Curriculum Guidelines)
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Sage Publications.
- Latifa, R., Fahri, M., Subchi, I., & Mahida, N. F. (2022). The Intention of Becoming Religiously Moderate in Indonesian Muslims: Do knowledge and attitude interfere? *Religions*, 13(6), Article 6. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13060540>
- Liagkis, M. K. (2022). The socio-pedagogical dynamics of religious knowledge in religious education: A participatory action-research in Greek secondary schools on understanding diversity. *Religions*, 13(5). <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050395>

- Ma'arif, M. A., Rokhman, M., Fatikh, M. A., Kartiko, A., Ahmadi, A., & Hasan, M. S. (2025). Kiai's leadership strategies in strengthening religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 13(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i1.1168>
- Maiden, J. (2024). From archives to the classroom: using religious archives to promote religious literacy and toleration amongst European young people. *Journal of Religious History*, 48(3), 343–351. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9809.13074>
- Mas'ud, M. (1989). *Economics and the political structure of the New Order 1966-1971*. LP3ES.
- Maxwell, B., & Hirsch, S. (2020). Dealing with illiberal and discriminatory aspects of faith in Religious education: a case study of Quebec's Ethics and Religious Culture curriculum. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 41(2), 162–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2020.1718911>
- Misirhiralall, S. D., & Soules, K. E. (2025). Religious literacies in educational contexts: Interdisciplinary perspectives. In *Religious Literacies in Educational Contexts: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003536574>
- Mosher, L. (2022). What is interreligious studies. In L. Mosher (Ed.), *The Georgetown companion to interreligious studies* (pp. 3–14). Georgetown University Press.
- Muhaemin, Rusdiansyah, Pabbajah, M. & Hasbi (2023). Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education as a Response to Intolerance Attitudes in Indonesian Educational Institutions, *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 14(2), 253--274. <https://jsser.org/index.php/jsser/article/view/4677/622>
- Mulkhan, A. M. (2001). The humanization of Islamic education. *Tashwirul Afkar, Journal of Reflections on Religious and Cultural Thought*, (11), 17–18.
- Nasir, M & Rijal, KM. (2021). Keeping the middle path: mainstreaming religious moderation through Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 11(2), 213-241, doi : 10.18326/ijims.v11i2. 213-241
- Nganga, L, Kambutu, J, Akpovo, MS & Thapa, S. (2025). Promoting intercultural competence: Experiences from Kenya and Nepal study abroad. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research (JSSER)*, 16 (4), 1-27. jsser.org.
- Nizah, N. (2016). Dinamika Madrasah Diniyah: A historical review. *Educasia: Journal of Islamic Education Research*, 11(1), 181–202.
- Nurcholish, M. (2004). *Interfaith Fiqh*. Jakarta: Paramadina.
- Osman, F. (2001). *Islam and human right, the challenge to Muslim and the world, in rethinking Islam and modernity*, ed. Abdel Wahab El-Effandi. The Islamic Foundation.

- Patel, E. (2016). *Interfaith leadership*. Beacon Press, 197 pages. ISBN-10: 0807033626. Paperback
- Ramadhan, M., & Hardinah, H. (2004). *Anthology of religious studies and education*. CV Aneka Ilmu.
- Rasyid, R. (2014). Challenges of Islamic education institutions as a Bastion for the moral defense of the books for religious education for higher education, interreligious education, basic ideas and implementation modules. *Nation. Lentera Pendidikan Journal*, 17(2), 243–255.
- Rido, Ubaid & Maswani. (2025). Kurikulum Cinta dan Pembelajaran Mendalam serta Implementasinya di Madrasah. (2025). *Al-Hudaya: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Pendidikan*, 1(04), 86-100. <https://risetpendikia.com/index.php/jurnal-alhudaya/article/view/128>
- Parker, C., & Gill, R. (2021). Religious literacy and restorative justice with youth: the role of community service professionals in mediating social inclusion. *Religion and Education*, 48(2), 141–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2021.1903789>.
- Peraturan Presiden (Perpres) Nomor 58 Tahun 2023 tentang Penguatan Moderasi Beragama. (Presidential Regulation (Perpres) Number 58 of 2023 concerning Strengthening Religious Moderation).
- Seiple, C., & Hoover, D. R. (2021). A case for cross-cultural religious literacy. *Review of Faith and International Affairs*, 19(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2021.1874165>
- Suhadi. (2016). *Supplementary books for religious education for higher education, interreligious education, basic ideas and implementation modules*. Solo: CDCC, Religion for Peace and KAICIID.
- Tayeb, A., & Weiss, M. L. (2024). Islamist government in Malaysia under PAS: Ideology, Policies, and Competition. *Asian Studies Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2024.2383682>
- Tri, H. D., Huyen, N. T., Hoa, D. T., Quynh, D. T., Viet, T. Q. (2026). When local education becomes fragile: Relation, governance, and schooling in Hanoi. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 9(1), 125-139. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2026.6>
- Umar, M., Ismail, F., Rahmi, S., & Arifin, Z. (2024). Transforming of moderate character education in Islamic Educational Institutions. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i1.4168>
- Willy, Kymlicka. (1996). *Multicultural, citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. Clarendon Press. Online ISBN: 9780191599712. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198290918.001.0001>

Zaini, W. (1995). *The world of Islamic students*. LPSM NU DIY.

Zamroni, E., Handayani, P. G., Gudnanto, Lestari, I., Azis, A. R., & Kumara, A. R. (2025). Mapping religious moderation and its impact on Islamic education in Indonesia: A bibliometric approach. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(1), 55–81. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i1.1487>

Zuhairansyah, A. (2014). The dilemma of Islamic education in Muslim elite schools between commercial and marginality. *Potensia Journal*, 13(2), 178.

Zhang, Y & Wildemuth, MB. (2009). Qualitative analysis of content,” In: B. M. Wildemuth, Ed., *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, Libraries Unlimited, 2009. pp. 1-12.