

CRITICAL THINKING AND RELIGIOUS MODERATION Instilling Religiously Moderate Values through the Teaching of Islamic Philosophy in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to prove that Islamic philosophy can present alternatives to overcome intolerance, radicalism, and extremism in Indonesia. This suggests that the teaching of Islamic philosophy in the country has succeeded in changing student perspective and mindset which tends to be closed-minded, exclusive, and extreme in nature in seeing differences in religions, sects, and beliefs to be open-minded, inclusive and moderate. With rational, critical and comprehensive teachings, students and alumni from the Islamic Theology and Philosophy (ITP) study programs have a more positive attitude in understanding plurality and diversity. Such change in mindset and attitude results from a curriculum design which offers moderate values, critical-dialectical teaching methods, and direct experiences in diversity. This study uses field research with qualitative technique and applies purposive sampling with snowballing technique to decide the study subjects. To collect the primary data, the data collecting-instruments include in-depth interviews with 28 resource persons comprising of lecturers, students and alumni in 5 ITP study programs in Indonesia, field observation and literature.

Keywords: Islamic philosophy, religious moderation, open-mind, critical thinking

Introduction

Hatred and hostility have increasingly occurred among Indonesian society, especially on social media. Referring to the research and analysis result conducted by Dian Junita Ningrum et al in 2018, 55% of hate speech on social media comes in different forms: spreading fake news or hoaxes with 20%, defamation and provocation with 30% and

incitement with 5% respectively.¹ This result is supported by a survey conducted in January-June 2019 on Twitter. The survey has recorded 15.2 million cases of anger for 6 months.

On average, about 70 thousand hate speeches happen in a day. More surprisingly, the survey only focuses on one platform, Twitter and does not include other social media. If the other social media is included, the number will certainly go larger and escalate.² In turn, Rahma Sugihartati, Bagong Suyanto, and Medhy Aginta Hidayat demonstrate in their research the role of social media as “channelization strategy” in spreading radical ideology and recruiting new cadres to radical Islamic groups in Indonesia.³

It is to be understood therefore, that the attitudes towards intolerance and radicalism in Indonesia have tent to increase from 46% in 2020 to 54% in 2021.⁴ In her study, Ummah states that the roots of intolerance and radicalism in the recent Indonesian context are heavily influenced by theological, doctrinaire, and literal religious discourses. Such religious discourses are limited to believers and non-believers, Muslim and non-Muslims, right and wrong, and me and you, which are practically ambiguous and uncertain.⁵ Acts of terrorism and extremism including suicide bombings, for example, are identified as a consequence of a person’s exclusive understanding on the meaning of faith and belief in the teachings of his religion.⁶ Such acts of terrorism and radicalism are not entirely influenced by internal factors, but also

¹ Dian Junita Ningrum, Suryadi Suryadi, and Dian Eka Chandra Wardhana, “Kajian Ujaran Kebencian Di Media Sosial,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Korpus* 2, no. 3 (2018): 241–252.

² “Survei: 70 Ribu Ujaran Kebencian Perhari Di Medsos Karena Netizen Lapar,” accessed August 11, 2021, <https://www.suara.com/health/2019/09/26/171015/-survei-70-ribu-ujaran-kebencian-perhari-di-medsos-karena-netizen-lapar>.

³ Rahma Sugihartati, Bagong Suyanto, and Medhy Aginta Hidayat, “Channelization Strategies of Radicalism Among Muslim University Students in Indonesia,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, no. 2 (2020): 309–334.

⁴ “Survei Wahid Institute: Intoleransi-Radikalisme Cenderung Naik,” accessed August 11, 2021, <https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/284269/survei-wahid-institute-intoleransi-radikalisme-cenderung-naik>.

⁵ Sun Choirul Ummah, “Akar Radikalisme Di Indonesia,” *Humanika* 12 (2012): 112–124.

⁶ Abd A’la, “Genealogi Radikalisme Muslim Nusantara: Akar Dan Karakteristik Pemikiran Dan Gerakan Kaum Padri Dalam Perspektif Hubungan Agama Dan Politik Kekuasaan” (Presented at the Pengukuhan Guru Besar IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Surabaya, 2008), 1–30, accessed August 10, 2021, <http://digilib.uinsby.ac.id/6597/>.

external factors including the gap between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie;⁷ the ideology of the Islamic state provoked by Darul Islam and the Masyumi Party due to the gap;⁸ and a response shown by Islam to the West to deny the Western secularism, for example.⁹ According to Nursalim, these factors are the results of hatred and hostility that lead to violence or any acts of terrorism.¹⁰ For this reason, hatred, intolerance, radicalism, and acts of terrorism are closely interconnected.

In today's digital era, this hatred has finally found its momentum. Lucy Pujasari Supratman mentions 50% of the entire Indonesian population reaching 265.4 million people are internet users. This figure has put Indonesia in the sixth position as the largest number of internet users in the world.¹¹ In the meantime, the study conducted by Achmad Sulfikar points out that (social) media contributes a major impact on spreading radicalism in the country.¹²

Promoting an inclusive, moderate, and rational perspective plays an essential role in preventing exclusive and radical understandings from becoming the way of life among the majority of Indonesian Muslim communities, and appreciating social diversities and realities, including in interpreting the sacred texts. Here, Islamic philosophy has the teachings and doctrines fitting such perspective.¹³ The principles of Islamic philosophy are capable of eliminating hatred and mutual hostility or bad blood as the root of intolerance. In addition, they can

⁷ M. Sirozi, "The Intellectual Roots of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia: Ja'far Umar Thalib of Laskar Jihad (Jihad Fighters) and His Educational Background," *The Muslim World* 95, no. 1 (2005): 81–120.

⁸ Ahmad Rizky Mardhatillah Umar, "Melacak Akar Radikalisme Islam Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 14, no. 2 (2010): 169–186 and Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *South East Asia Research* 10, no. 2 (2002): 117–154..

⁹ Anzar Abdullah, "Gerakan Radikalisme Dalam Islam: Perspektif Historis," *ADDIN* 10, no. 1 (February 1, 2016): 1–28.

¹⁰ Muhammad Nursalim, "Deradikalisasi Terorisme: Studi Atas Epistemologi, Model Interpretasi Dan Manipulasi Pelaku Teror," *Kalam* 8, no. 2 (2017): 329.

¹¹ Lucy Pujasari Supratman, "Penggunaan Media Sosial Oleh Digital Native," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 15, no. 1 (2018): 47–60.

¹² Achmad Sulfikar, "Swa-Radikalisasi Melalui Media Sosial Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Jurnalisa* 4, no. 1 (2018): 76–90.

¹³ Aminuddin Hassan, at all, "The Role of Islamic Philosophy of Education in Aspiring Holistic Learning," *Procedia Social and Behaviora Science*, 5 (2020), 2113-2118.

also suppress the dynamics of radicalism and extremism. Accordingly, the Islamic philosophy has the ability to create an open and moderate society and build a peaceful, advanced and civilized Indonesia.

The study forms a hypothesis that the teachings of Islamic philosophy can be an alternative to overcome hatred, hostility, exclusivism, radicalism and acts of terrorism. The hypothesis is supported by the studies conducted by M. Akmansyah,¹⁴ Ulya Ulya,¹⁵ Raden Lukman Fauroni,¹⁶ and I.B.S. Saitya.¹⁷ However, these studies are theoretical in nature and are limited to temporary conclusions. No empirical evidence related to the influence of teaching philosophy in changing one's paradigms and views in order to become inclusive, open-minded, and moderate has been found. For this reason, this study aims to empirically prove the hypothesis and find an alternative to solve acts of terrorism and extremism in Indonesia.

This study is field research, which is a case study of the Islamic Theology and Philosophy (ITP) study programs at State Islamic Universities in Indonesia, especially the ones at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta, Gunung Djati Bandung, Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Raden Fatah Palembang, and Imam Bonjol State Padang. Referring to the scope of study, the objects here are institutionally or formally five ITP study programs in Indonesia. In the meantime, the material objects are the views presented by the head of the study program, lecturers, students and alumni comprising of 28 people. The sampling technique used in determining the material objects is purposive sampling with snowballing technique. To collect the primary data, some instruments including in-depth interview, field observation and literature are taken.

To analyze the data and accordingly draw a conclusion, inductive and deductive methods are applied. This study proposes three research questions: 1) How does the teaching of Islamic philosophy, along with

¹⁴ M. Akmansyah, "Membangun Toleransi Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Spiritual Sufistik," *KALAM* 10, no. 2 (February 13, 2017): 517–536.

¹⁵ Ulya Ulya, "Logika Wujud Sadra Meretas Nalar Radikalisme Beragama," *Jurnal Theologia* 27, no. 1 (2016): 1–24.

¹⁶ Raden Lukman Fauroni, "Orientasi Local Wisdom Dalam Kajian Filsafat Islam Di Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 7, no. 2 (2017): 409–431.

¹⁷ I.B.S. Saitya, "Filsafat Perennial Sebagai Upaya Mencegah Radikalisme Di Indonesia," *Sintesa: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 9, no. 1 (2018): 22–27.

its implications, promote moderate views and attitudes? 2) How is the Islamic Theology and Philosophy curriculum designed as a teaching model to develop moderate views, and which Islamic philosophy values can work as a source of values in developing moderate views and prevent radicalism?

The Values of Moderation in ITP Curriculum Design

Curriculum is like a road map which is used as a guide or direction for those who are traveling. If the map is blurry and unclear, the person using it will get lost. Similarly, if an instruction leads people to a narrow, closed-minded, and even exclusive and intolerant view, the resulting outcome does not go far from the process. For this reason, the curriculum becomes a benchmark and determinant of success in achieving the vision, missions and objectives of education,¹⁸ one of which is building relationships among inclusive and moderate religions.¹⁹

How is the curriculum in the ITP study programs in Indonesia designed? Does the curriculum design include values that lead to moderate and tolerant views? To answer these questions, the professors of Islamic philosophy at UIN Jakarta, Rd. Mulyadhi Kartanegara and Amsal Bakhtiar, mention that the curriculum development at the University has led to an inclusive and moderate curriculum in the sense of a balance between reason and revelation, especially since the period of Harun Nasution leadership. According to them, the University attempts to dismantle the narrow way of thinking among Indonesian Muslims, particularly in their religious view, which is only to focus on the study of jurisprudence.²⁰

The Head of the ITP study program at Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Robby Habiba Abror, states that all courses in the study program teach the values of moderation. He says, “Almost all of our courses are directed to the religious moderation. In fact, you know it yourself that

¹⁸ Permendikbud no. 3, *Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi*, 2020 and ; Perpres no. 8, *Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia*, 2012.

¹⁹ Lemecha Wariyo and Amare Asgedom, “Promoting Effects of Abilities While Enhancing Probability of College-Success: A Moderation Role of Higher Education,” *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science* 14, no. 2 (2021): 101–117.

²⁰ Amsal Bakhtiar, “Interview,” September 13, 2020; Rd. Mulyadhi Kartanegara, “Interview,” July 24, 2020.

the Philosophy course welcomes all schools of thought.”²¹ His statement is confirmed by the head of the ITP study program at Gunung Djati Bandung, Neng Hannah.²² According to her, the implementation of the values of moderation in the curriculum design is completed in three approaches: first, the moderation themes are distributed into several subjects including Islamic philosophy, Western Eastern philosophy, and Nusantara philosophy.²³

One of the lecturers in the ITP study program at the Gunung Djati Bandung, Iu Rusliana, mentions the spirit towards the moderation is evident despite the fact that courses which directly study religious moderation are not explicitly available. The Philosophy of Religion course, for example, studies the teachings and philosophy of the world’s major religions. In the same way, the contents of the Sociology, Anthropology, and Psychology of Religion courses are not limited to the teachings of Islam, but also the ones of other religions.²⁴

The second approach is applying the values of moderation in the vision and missions during the curriculum formulation. This approach is taken by the ITP study program at Raden Fatah Palembang which explicitly mentions the values in its vision and missions and confirms that the establishment of the ITP study program is inseparable from the Palembang multicultural communities, both in terms of religion and ethnic.²⁵ With the existence of such communities, the ITP curriculum can meet the needs of a diverse and plural community.²⁶

The last approach is showing the spirit of moderation in the entire system and curriculum design. This approach is widely applied in the ITP study programs at five UIN in Indonesia. The ITP curriculum offers Islamic Philosophy course which is viewed from its historical perspective, schools of thought, and figures. Similarly, Eastern and Western Philosophy is also taught as a comparison to Islamic

²¹ Robby H. Abror, “Interview,” July 1, 2020.

²² Neng Hannah, “Interview,” August 9, 2020.

²³ Fakultas Ushuluddin, *Buku Panduan Akademik Tahun 2016 Fakultas Ushuluddin* (Bandung: Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2016).

²⁴ Iu Rusliana, “Interview,” July 24, 2020.

²⁵ Tim Penyusun Prodi Aqidah dan Filsafat Islam, “Kurikulum Program Studi Aqidah Dan Filsafat Islam Berbasis Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia” (Prodi AFI Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Pemikiran Islam UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2017).

²⁶ Ahmad Yani, “Interview,” July 2, 2020.

philosophy. This approach is taken to open students' insight and knowledge, so they can learn and understand different and diverse thoughts, schools, teachings, and methods. This approach is confirmed by Ahmad Badri Harkas, a student in the ITP study program at Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, saying, "I was not interested in learning this [Eastern philosophy] at first. After a deep study, I've found out that there are other types of truth according to the respective religions. The claim to their truth is not baseless, but they have strong arguments towards it."²⁷

According to Ermagusti, the head of the ITP Study Program at Imam Bonjol Padang, the Kalam or Theology course which is considered to be one of the factors of exclusivism in Islam, is designed to introduce the values of moderation. This course teaches students various traditional and modern schools of thought, both the extreme and liberal ones. After learning the course, the students are expected to have a broader view and become more open-minded as one of the conditions to own the values of moderation is the existence of broader thoughts, views, and knowledge.²⁸

His statement is confirmed by Sera Irvan Sapriadi's confession, a student in the ITP Study Program at Imam Bonjol Padang. He says that he had known Kalam (Theology) since he was a student at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (State Islamic Senior High School) 3 Pesisir Selatan, Padang. During his time, the teaching of Kalam was only limited to faith and Allah's attributes. However, after entering the ITP study program, he points out that the discussion is broader, studying God's actions and their relation to human actions, God's provisions and the universe.²⁹

At the time of studying this course, he has found the values of moderation. Theology, according to him, is not a foundation only to have faith, but also to act and behave in everyday life. Basically, moderation is the teachings, principles, and values of how humans behave and make a healthy and good relationship with other people of the same or different religion. For this reason, the more moderate a person is the better things he does. At last, he admits that these values

²⁷ Ahmad Badri Harkas, "Interview," July 6, 2020.

²⁸ Ermagusti, "Interview," July 5, 2020.

²⁹ Sera Irvan Sapriadi, "Interview," July 8, 2020.

are taught in Islamic theology.³⁰ Sapriadi's previous statement is confirmed by other students and alumni in the ITP study program including Ghufron Akbari Wardana, Islah Muhammad, and Dikdik Triandi.³¹

Ilham, Azzahra Rosie, and Novia Ramadhani mention the same thing to what Triandi, Wardana, and Muhammad have experienced.³² According to them, the teaching of moderation is not only incorporated in general and broader philosophy-related subjects (Islamic and Western philosophy), but also associated with local wisdom values including Civic Education, Indonesian Islamic Thought, Pancasila, and Study of Religions and Schools of Faith.³³ Their statement is acknowledged by the head of the ITP study program at Raden Fatah Palembang.³⁴ The students can also identify the differences and similarities.

Further, Ikbar Ziva shares his experience and points out that the course teaching moderation is Philosophical Sufism.³⁵ This course teaches the doctrine of *khauf* (fear) and *raja'* (hope). Referring to the two concepts, one's attitude is not necessarily more dominant. However, if associated with the concept of moderation, the two sides - *khauf* and *raja'* – are less extreme. Here, to balance the two, the Sufis propose another concept, which is *mahabbah* (love). According to Ziva, this is a small example of the moderation offered by Sufism. His view is supported by Nanang Tahqiq who claims that the Philosophical Sufism offers the teaching of love.³⁶

Referring to the above data, descriptions, and analysis, it is not only Islamic philosophy which inherently contains and teaches the values of moderation, but also the curriculum design implemented in the ITP study program and promoting the principle of inclusivism. This principle is the foundation to develop ways of thinking and attitudes towards moderation for students in particular and Indonesian

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Islah Muhammad, "Interview," July 12, 2020; Dikdik Triandi, "Interview," July 3, 2020; Ghufron Akbari Wardana, "Interview," July 13, 2020.

³² Ilham, "Interview," July 6, 2020; Novia Ramdhani, "Interview," July 6, 2020.

³³ Harkas, "Interview."

³⁴ Yani, "Interview."

³⁵ Ikbar Ziva, "Interview," July 7, 2020.

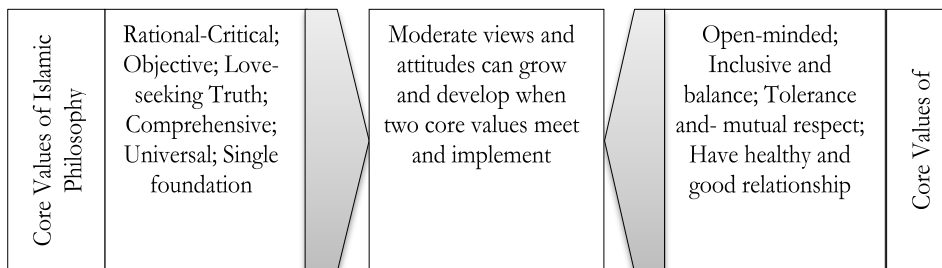
³⁶ Nanang Tahqiq, "Interview," September 19, 2020.

society in general. Without inclusive curriculum design, religious moderation seems difficult to implement and become a way of life for them. In addition, lecturers also teach students and give them role models. Therefore, there is a positive correlation among teaching, curriculum, and teaching process, especially in regard to the values of moderation.

Islamic Philosophy as the Teaching of Moderation

If the ITP curriculum is designed and developed to instill the values of moderation, the next question is if the teaching of the Islamic philosophy itself contains and leads to the values. Here, understanding the definition, scope, and indicators of Islamic philosophy and moderation is necessary to answer such question. As stated in the previous description, one of the indicators of moderation that a person is considered moderate is having a broader and rational view, holistic and universal thought. In short, this indicator is said to be the indicator of Islamic philosophy entirely, as the following illustration:

Figure 1. Core Values of Islamic Philosophy and Moderation



As mentioned by all informants; lecturers, students, and alumni said that philosophy is rational, systematic, comprehensive and objective in nature. This means it sees things as they are objectively. Similarly, in view of a religion, it sees the religious teachings practiced by its adherents by judging them based on what they adhere to, not the beliefs of those who judge. A rational and objective philosophical method will avoid mutual suspicion and negative thoughts. In regard to comprehensive thinking, Rasyid adds that it is multi-dimensional thinking. Such thinking plays a significant role in making a positive contribution to the relationship between religion and schools of thought. The comprehensive thinking is also known as critical

thinking.³⁷ Thinking critically and comprehensively, said Nyayu Siti Sarah, leads to an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect.³⁸ This indicator is also confirmed by Sapriadi, a student at Gunung Djati Bandung.³⁹ Sulyana,⁴⁰ Islah Muhammad,⁴¹ and Sarah.⁴²

Epistemologically, the teachings of Islamic philosophy are centered on the human mind which has specialties and virtues in thinking.⁴³ Basically, the philosophy addresses the critical thinking to seek the truth about an object from its roots. The meaning of truth here is not in a relative, temporary, diverse sense, but an absolute, eternal, and singular truth.⁴⁴ The singular and eternal truth in the doctrine of Islamic theology is referred to as the principle of *tawhīd*. In Islamic philosophy, it is known as *wahdat al-wujūd*, the Oneness of Existence.

This principle is what distinguishes Islamic philosophy from Western philosophy. According to the lecturers and students in the ITP study program at Raden Fatah Palembang, Nyayu Siti Sarah and Azzahra Rosie, western philosophy is based on a history of secularism, which is the separation between science and religion.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Islamic philosophy is has to do with religious values. This means studying [Islamic] philosophy will further strengthen the belief in religious doctrines and values. Triandi and Wardana express the same opinion.⁴⁶ The Islamic philosophy, for instance, studies the relationship between reason and revelation, and religion and philosophy. In contrast, the Western philosophy rejects religion and all of its doctrines considering that religion and philosophy are mutually negating.

³⁷ M. Rasyid, "Interview," July 10, 2020.

³⁸ Nyayu Siti Sarah, "Interview," July 5, 2020.

³⁹ Sapriadi, "Interview."

⁴⁰ Sulyana, "Interview," July 24, 2020.

⁴¹ Ramdhani, "Interview."

⁴² Sarah, "Interview."

⁴³ Nidhal Guessoum, "Science, Religion, and the Quest for Knowledge and Truth: An Islamic Perspective," *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 5, no. 1 (2010): 55–69.

⁴⁴ Daniel D. De Haan, "Avicenna's Healing and the Metaphysics of Truth," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 56, no. 1 (2018): 17–44.

⁴⁵ Tata Azzahra Salsabila Rosie, "Interview," July 3, 2020.

⁴⁶ Wardana, "Interview."

M. Rasyid, an alumnus from the ITP study program at Imam Bonjol Padang, says that Islamic philosophy leads to rational, deep and radical think.⁴⁷ Although Islamic philosophy and Western philosophy are both rational and radical, the former suggests that the principle of rational and deep thinking is not only intended to seek relative and contemporary truth, but more importantly eternal and absolute truth. Here, if the nature of truth is not likely to generate through rational analysis, the Qur'an will then explain it. In other words, Islamic Philosophy has a religious content, the one that Western philosophy does not. Therefore, moderate views and attitudes can grow and further develop if one owns a complete and comprehensive foundation. Such views and attitudes can only be achieved if he has a solid and single foundation. This principle is called *tamhîd*.

The Teaching Method in the Implementation of Moderation

The Arabic proverb saying *al-tariqah abammu min al-mâddab* (method is more important than content) is confirmed by a modern German philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, as quoted by N. Verbin. According to him, general theories about a meaning, thought, or concept used to understand the nature of an object is not necessary. He said, "What we need is a method that puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything."⁴⁸ His statement is in line with Carl Wieman's, the 2001 Nobel Prize winner in Physics who was once in a team of advisers to President Barack Obama for science. He said, "How you teach is more important than who does the teaching."⁴⁹

The interview and data results lead to a conclusion that there are six teaching methods in implementing the values of moderation by lecturers in instilling religious moderation. The first method is description and dialogue through seminars and discussions, as mentioned by the Head of the ITP Study Program at Imam Bonjol Padang, Ermagusti, who keeps reminding the lecturers to teach and

⁴⁷ Rasyid, "Interview."

⁴⁸ N. Verbin, *Martyrdom: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell Pub, 2012), accessed August 11, 2021, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-9205.2011.01456.x>.

⁴⁹ "Study: It's Not Teacher, but Method That Matters | Fox News," accessed August 11, 2021, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/study-its-not-teacher-but-method-that-matters>.

instill the values of moderation.⁵⁰ In the same way, Robby H Abror, regularly conducts some briefing for the lecturers to instill the values of moderation by applying the thoughts of philosophers.⁵¹ Ziva, a student in the ITP study program at Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, supports Abror's statement that the moderation is promoted through seminars by inviting interfaith and inter-school speakers.⁵²

Rusliana states that the ITP Study Program at Gunung Djati Bandung does not only conduct some socialization, but also declares the spirit of moderation as the vision of the study program. As an alumnus from the study program, he also admits that this spirit has been around since he was in undergraduate college. This declaration is inseparable from the ITP lecturers including Afif Muhammad and Dadang Kahmad who are well aware of the significance of moderation. It has been more intensely and officially addressed and even included in the curriculum, teaching, course and research themes since 2015, especially during Rosihon Anwar's term of service as the Dean of the Faculty.⁵³

Rusliana's statement is acknowledged by Hannah who serves as the Head of study program from 2019 to 2024. Since 2014, the discussion about moderation has been taken into account and included in the curriculum, by holding seminars about it.⁵⁴ In the meantime, the ITP study program at Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta often invites interfaith leaders and schools of thought to discuss and have dialogue on religious moderation, like Bhikkhu Pante Banafaro from Borobudur Temple, and the Christian representatives especially from the CRCS UGM.⁵⁵

Ghufron A. Wardana, a student in the ITP study program at Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, admits that the values of moderation are socialized through dialogue and discussions due to the absence of courses related to them. He further explains that materials on religious moderation are obtained outside the courses and are widely discussed in the ITP student forums, discussion forums on religious moderation,

⁵⁰ Ermagusti, "Interview."

⁵¹ Abror, "Interview."

⁵² Ziva, "Interview."

⁵³ Rusliana, "Interview."

⁵⁴ Hannah, "Interview."

⁵⁵ Abror, "Interview."

or seminars. The faculty programs about religious moderation are usually held in seminars.⁵⁶

The second approach to instill the values of religious moderation is critical-dialectical method, the process of asking and answering religion and faith-related issues. Dialectical thinking means totality thinking in which its elements do not only stand in parallel, but also mutually negate, contradict, and mediate to one another. The dialectical method emphasizes that the mutual negation, contradiction, and mediation do not only occur at the abstract level, but also in reality. Having faith and religion suggests differences that negate and contradict to each other. For this reason, the so-called elements do not only happen in the human thought, but also in reality. The dialogue of contradicting differences is known as a dialectical process in which its objective is to make mediation and an encounter with differences.

Critical and dialectical thinking is defined as thinking within the unification of theory and practice framework. Dialectical thinking does not mean contradicting theory, thought, and idea with action, but suggests how a theory can produce praxis. Theory and praxis are two dimensions of human life that are one and similar, and both must run in the way they do not include or exclude each other.⁵⁷ This method is applied to raise awareness of the importance of religious moderation.

The implementation of this method in the teaching of Islamic philosophy is mentioned by Ahmad Badri Harkas and Rusfan Efendi, the student and alumnus in the ITP study program at Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. According to them, the lecturers instill the values of religious moderation through critical and dialectical teaching method.⁵⁸ With such method, the students are expected to have the ability to resolve a problem. When a person has a philosophical state of mind, he will see and analyze a problem deeply and comprehensively, particularly concerning other religious beliefs. Harkas adds that methods play an important role in gaining knowledge and changing

⁵⁶ Wardana, "Interview". It is to be noted that UIN Yogyakarta is the first Islamic educational institution in Indonesia which paves the way for interreligious dialogue. See ; Faisal Ismail, "Paving the Way for Interreligious Dialogue, Tolerance, and Harmony: Following Mukti Ali's Path," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): 147–178.

⁵⁷ Sindhunata, *Dilema Usaha Manusia Rasional, Teori Kritis Sekolah Frankfurt, Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2019).

⁵⁸ Rusfan Efendi, "Interview," June 29, 2020.

paradigms, attitudes, and actions.⁵⁹ Those statements are strengthened by Wardana, a student in the ITP study program at Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.⁶⁰

Giving external and internal examples is the third method to instill the values of moderation. The meaning of external is to set an example of the importance and practice of moderation in society. As stated by Azzahra Rosie, the values of moderation are not only implemented through lectures and descriptions, but also the actions of the lecturers, which are seen, for example, from the way they appreciate the diversity of their students and when they have different views.⁶¹

Another practice of moderation is directly being involved and living together with diverse communities and societies that have different religions, schools of thought or sects. This dimension is the fourth example experienced by students, alumni, and lecturers in the ITP study program. They implement the values of moderation through personal experiences and well-planned programs designed by the campus, especially the ITP study programs and off-campus organizations.

Building moderation outside campus, for example, is experienced by alumni from the ITP study programs at Imam Bonjol State Islamic University Padang and Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Silmi Nurman and Rusfan Efendi, respectively. Nurman, for instance, is actively involved at Pusaka Foundation, a non-governmental organization (NGO), located in Padang. This NGO is engaged in Freedom of Religion and Belief. Basically, it was founded in 2000, but Nurman joined it in early 2019. The director is Hendi Sudarto, one of the researchers at the Setara Institute. The program designed by the Pustaka Foundation is in line with one of the programs in the Ministry of Religious Affairs which organizes religious freedom-related activities. In addition, Nurman has also actively taken a part in the *Gerakan Cinta Islam/GIC* (Movement to Love Islam).⁶²

⁵⁹ Harkas, "Interview."

⁶⁰ Wardana, "Interview."

⁶¹ Rosie, "Interview."

⁶² Silmi Novita Nurman, "Interview," July 13, 2020. On Gerakan Islam Cinta, see for example ; Indah Rahmawati, "Penyebaran Damai Islam Melalui Literasi Islam Cinta: Studi Terhadap Organisasi 'Gerakan Islam Cinta' Di Tangerang Selatan" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, 2019), accessed April 27, 2022, <http://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/24965/>.

Unlike Nurman, Efendi joined the Serawung Yogya community, which is a gathering place for the interfaith youths. According to his account, he has been actively involved since he was in college. The activity organized by the community includes interfaith meetings in Semarang, meet-and-greet, and joint projects. In fact, he has been the coordinator of making films about diversity, tolerance, and peace in this community.⁶³

One of the ITP study program lecturers who have actively been involved in building moderation is Zaim Rais, the chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Communication Forum. According to him, this Forum gets an annual budget to organize activities to socialize and prevent radicalism among communities in different areas in Padang, West Sumatra. He regularly visits the village officials, women communities, customary leaders, religious scholars, religious educators and student community as well. In his visit, he shares some topics including religious moderation with them. “What I said in the forum is exactly what I said to mas Humaidi.”⁶⁴

Sulyana, Islah Muhammad, and Ghufron have practiced the values of moderation in personal and social lives, which means experiencing living in harmony and peace and accepting all differences in the family, neighborhood and community. Harmony in diversity is accordingly built and upheld. Muhammad, for instance, has friends with different faiths and even atheists. He interacts and makes a dialogue about the reasons his friend has chosen to be an atheist. He has also visited a Catholic church and participated in worship rituals followed by a talk about Catholic Christianity.⁶⁵ These activities are carried out in order to establish communication, seek mutual understanding, and finding similarities.⁶⁶

The practice of moderation in the well-planned programs designed by the campus, especially for the ITP study programs, the fifth approach, is manifested through the courses that have practical contents including Community Service Program and Student Professional Practice and other courses. Rosie, for example, joined the Community Service Program in East Nusa Tenggara. She comes from

⁶³ Efendi, “Interview.”

⁶⁴ Zaim Rais, “Interview,” July 4, 2020.

⁶⁵ Muhammad, “Interview.”

⁶⁶ Sulyana, “Interview.”

a Muslim family and environment. During the Community Service Program, she came into contact with a multicultural community; different religion and ethnic group to be precise.⁶⁷

Like Rosie, Sulyana also performed the Community Service Program in a place with diverse communities. He mentions that he was sent to Lhokseumawe which has four religious' sects; Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam (PERSIS) and Islam Bai'at. Each sect claims that Islam is the purest group and other groups are considered to have mixed with traditions and cultures outside the religion. As one of Persis figures said that it came to this place (Lhokseumawe) to purify Islam. Such view is in line with the one stated by Muhammadiyah. However, when Islam Bai'at came, differences and conflicts began growing.⁶⁸ With this experience, Sulyana eventually realized how important philosophical knowledge is when dealing with people who have different views, thoughts, and beliefs. With such knowledge, he is required to always see things comprehensively and deeply, not by the look.

When taking the Study of Religions course, Wardana, Rusfan Efendi and their friends had the opportunity to visit a Protestantism house of worship. They came and directly had conversation with the priest. They discuss about some topics related to the basics of religion, worship rituals and so on. The discussion shows that the world religions began to renew their religious teachings. They no longer worship their religious symbols, and that is what they encountered when they had a discussion with the Protestant priest. Basically, this is expressed as an answer to a question related to the trinity. According to the priest, the Trinity does mean three, but three in the sense of nature; the nature of motherhood, sonship and fatherhood. He illustrated it with the 99 names of God in Islam, *asma' al-husna'* (the good names).

What Rosie, Sulyana, and Wardana share about the practice of moderation is also implemented in the ITP study program at Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, by inviting religious figures from Shia, Tariqah Qadriyah Naqsabandiyah (TQN), and Nahdlatul Ulama. "This is one of the practices taken to implement the values of moderation at the

⁶⁷ Rosie, "Interview."

⁶⁸ Sulyana, "Interview."

University.”⁶⁹ Ahamd Badri Harkas, a student in the ITP study program at the University supports Abror’s statement. He mentions his encounter with people from different schools of thought or sects does not only involve Shia, but also the Salafi.⁷⁰

The last method, the sixth, in implementing the values of moderation is conducting research and writing scientific papers in terms of Final Year Project and Community Service Program or Student Professional Practice reports. Rusliana said, “In our study program, research is not conducted in a random choice. Students must follow the existing research policies which lead to religious moderation.”⁷¹ The statement of Rusliana is also confirmed by Zaim Rais⁷² Yem Fikri Rani,⁷³ and Hannah.⁷⁴

The implementation is carried out by Azzahra Rosie who write an article entitled “Nilai-Nilai Leluhur Suku Bajo dalam Membangun Sikap Bertoleransi” (The Ancestral Values in the Bajo Tribe in Building Tolerance). The article was published in the *Intelektualita* Journal. Her article points out four values that become the foundation for the life of the Bajo tribe to live peacefully. These values include promoting harmony, maintaining the balance of nature, maintaining good relationships, avoiding conflicts, preserving socio-cultural values, inter-tribal marriages, trading system, mutual benefit, mutual assistance and togetherness, attending invitations, maintaining good manners, eating areca nut and maintaining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. These values are reflected in the village where the majority of the villagers are Christian and Muslims are minority.⁷⁵

Yen Fikri Rani, a lecturer in the ITP study program at Raden Fatah State Islamic University Palembang also wrote an article entitled “Filsafat Perennial: Melacak Titik Temu Agama-Agama dan Krisis Humanistik” (Perennial Philosophy: Tracing the Meeting Point of

⁶⁹ Abror, “Interview.”

⁷⁰ Harkas, “Interview.”

⁷¹ Rusliana, “Interview.”

⁷² Rais, “Interview.”

⁷³ Yen Fikri Rani, “Interview,” July 5, 2020.

⁷⁴ Hannah, “Interview.”

⁷⁵ Syefriyeni Syefriyeni and Tata Azzahra Salsabila Rosie, “Nilai-Nilai Leluhur Suku Bajo Dalam Membangun Sikap Bertoleransi,” *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial dan Sains* 9, no. 1 (2020): 179–192.

Religions and the Humanistic Crisis).⁷⁶ In this article, the perennial philosophy is used as a basis to find the common ground in religions in the way they are seen from their exoteric and esoteric aspects. She said, “I started it by identifying people’s understanding which is often trapped under the exoteric aspect.”⁷⁷

In fact, Nanang Tahqiq, a lecturer in the ITP study program at Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, wrote an article about the moderation of Indonesian Islam in 2011. The article shows that the Indonesian Muslims, with their experiences living in Indonesia and overseas, do not allow any acts of violence. They have upheld and applied the values of moderation in the life of the nation and state. Tahqiq has even given an example of a Catholic philosopher from Germany, Franz Magnis Suseno, who has lived in Indonesia for 50 years. This example proves that Indonesian people are very moderate and accept differences.⁷⁸

In addition to practicing the values and attitudes of moderation in their lives, the informants and resource persons also promote these values through writings, non-governmental organization programs, and well-planned programs from the campus. Another means to promote them is making films. In short, all practices of moderation performed by the informants are the impact of the teaching of Islamic philosophy.

The Influence of the Teaching of Islamic Philosophy

The first and main research question is whether the teaching of Islamic philosophy has an influence on shaping the pattern of life and moderate views. All informants mention that the teaching of Islamic philosophy plays a very important role in changing and building moderate views and attitudes in religions. By studying the Islamic Philosophy, they are more open-minded, inclusive, and moderate in communicating, behaving, and having a positive view of different beliefs.

Ahmad Badri Harkas and Ilham said that studying philosophy has enabled him to enhance his knowledge, broaden the horizons of their

⁷⁶ Yen Fikri Rani, “Filsafat Perennial: Melacak Titik Temu Agama Agama Dan Krisis Humanistik,” *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syariat dan Masyarakat* 19, no. 2 (2019): 285–294.

⁷⁷ Rani, “Interview.”

⁷⁸ Nanang Tahqiq, “Refleksi Untuk Moderasi Islam-Indonesia,” *Dialog* 34, no. 1 (2011): 49–64.

thinking and behave. Enhancing knowledge and broadening the horizon of thinking means the philosophy can help connect with different fields of science including politics, culture, and economics. They mention that they are more interested in the methodology of thinking than the philosophy itself.⁷⁹ They even studies both Western and Islamic epistemology to further widen his thinking.⁸⁰ Tiara and Julhendra also claim that philosophy has a great influence on changing the way of thinking. Julhendra, for example, says he benefits a lot from studying philosophy. One of these benefits is that he can strengthen his faith and becomes more knowledgeable. He adds Islamic philosophy can better understand the diversity of sects and schools of thought in Islam.⁸¹

According to Sulyana, philosophy is based on the understanding of pluralism, the belief in the One and Only God and there will be no one like Him. With such understanding, He is the almighty and the omnipotent, and others than him are insignificant and powerless. One substantial and concrete example that philosophy is as a way of moderation is Sulyana's experience when he met a group of Muslims who owned different views and schools of theology during his Community Service Program in Kampung Naga, Bandung, West Java.⁸² Ghufron has also experienced significantly positive changes, particularly in relation to religious practices or worship. Before studying philosophy, he did not critically question if the practices he performed is God's command. Moreover, he was just blind faith who took for granted by following the fatwas of a scholar. However, after studying it, he no longer took it for granted and has, in turn, sought the true essence of Islam or the essence of religion.

Novia Ramadhani defines moderation as balanced or moderate state, which means not to cross the line. She claims that studying Islamic philosophy will lead to a moderate view of religion as the learners attempt to understand the teachings of religion according to its essence and seek to its roots.⁸³ In fact, the key to Islamic moderation is arguably philosophy. When the key is lost, moderation

⁷⁹ Harkas, "Interview."

⁸⁰ Ilham, "Interview."

⁸¹ Julhendra, "Interview," July 8, 2020.

⁸² Sulyana, "Interview."

⁸³ Ramdhani, "Interview."

will never exist. Further, in view of the word moderate itself, this means occupying a center position on the left–right spectrum. In association with religion, such definition shows no tendency to only perform worship practices and show concern with fiqh issues or focus on the spiritual aspect. To balance the dimensions of religion, philosophy is the only way. This definition is also acknowledged Tiara Rahma Kurnia, a student in the ITP study program at Gunung Djati Bandung. He underlines that philosophy sharpens the way of thinking in order to be critically shaped.⁸⁴

In the meantime, Ahmad Badri Harkas mentions that before taking the ITP study program, he took a study at a *pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School) under the auspices of Nahdlatul Ulama located in Sulawesi. Even though it is a Nahdlatul Ulama-based *pesantren*, its teachings are very strict against any teachings which are considered different from what it believes. During his study, he was never introduced to other religions. In fact, it sees other schools of thought with cynicism and refuses to have a dialogue, discuss, and exchange views. However, he could see a difference when taking the ITP study program.⁸⁵

The same statement is mentioned by Novia Ramadhani. She can realize the differences between the times before and when studying philosophy. Before studying it, she did not approach and analyze a religious thought critically. However, during her time learning philosophy at the study program, she could understand everything fundamentally by referring to its ontology, epistemology and axiology dimensions.⁸⁶ Tiara also highlights the difference before and after taking the ITP study program to reach the level of tolerance and moderation. In percentage, her level of tolerance is about 50% before taking the study program. However, a change has happened after her study. The level of her tolerance has increased to 70-90%.⁸⁷ Those impression also is experienced by Ilham and Triandi. Ilham, before studying at ITP Yogyakarta, he studied at State University of Jakarta. Here, he studied at Faculty of Mathematic and Natural Science and the right-wing Islamic group has significant influence to him. If he

⁸⁴ Tiara Rahma Kurnia, “Interview,” July 24, 2020.

⁸⁵ Harkas, “Interview.”

⁸⁶ Ramdhani, “Interview.”

⁸⁷ Kurnia, “Interview.”

continues his study in this faculty, he will be radical and not moderate.⁸⁸

Figure 2. Illustration of Statement, Process of Teaching, Design Curriculum and its Relevance to the Moderation

Core values of Islamic philosophy and moderation	Learning process and approaches		The result
	Curriculum Design	Building holistic-comprehensive; Based on multicultural and local wisdom paradigm; Inclusive Vision and orientation	More open-minded, inclusive, and moderate in communicating, behaving, and having a positive view of different belief; Reach the level of tolerance up to 70-90%, after study at ITP; Promote moderation values through research writing and non-governmental organization programs, and well-planned programs from the campus.
Teaching Method	Description, dialogue and discussions; Critical and dialectical teaching method; Living together with diverse communities; Through Community Service Program [KKN] and Student Professional Practice [PPM]; Inviting religious figures; Conducting research and writing scientific papers		

Ghufron has also experienced significantly positive changes, particularly in relation to religious practices or worship. Before studying philosophy, he did not critically question if the practices he performed is God’s command. Moreover, he was just blind faith who took for granted by following the fatwas of a scholar. However, after studying it, he no longer took it for granted and has, in turn, sought the true essence of Islam. Having knowledge and positive view and being more open-minded by accepting differences have an impact on attitudes.⁸⁹

In fact, the teaching of Islamic philosophy can take the informants to always be involved in discussions, forums, and institutions that promote the values of tolerance and moderation without fear. Sulyana

⁸⁸ Ilham, “Interview and Triandi, “Interview.””

⁸⁹ Harkas, “Interview.”

says that Islamic philosophy encourages students to be more open with different patterns of thought and views. They are taught to respect the existing traditions and accept diversity.⁹⁰ According to I. Muhammad, the teaching of Islamic Philosophy enables them to see diversity in religion, belief, and schools of thought positively.⁹¹ In addition, Novia Ramadhani points out that philosophy can develop a more open and systematic mindset in understanding religious phenomena.⁹² At last, Nyayu Sarah claims the main source of intolerance is the mindset, and philosophy is able to change it.⁹³ All statement, process of teaching, design curriculum and its relevance to the moderation can be seen in the illustration at Figure 2.

Conclusion

Referring to the data and analysis, the teaching of Islamic philosophy in the ITP study programs has made a very significant impact on building religious moderation in Indonesia. The informants and resource persons admit that they have chosen the Islamic philosophy as their way of life, particularly in practicing the values of moderation. Besides teaching the values of moderation, Islamic philosophy is also regarded as a way to lead to moderate views and attitudes.

For that reason, the more a person learns Islamic philosophy and puts its teachings into practice, the more moderate, inclusive, and tolerant he will be. In addition, the ITP study programs are able to provide an alternative to fight against acts of terrorism and extremism in Indonesia. Here, applying philosophical approach and instilling the values of Islamic philosophy in the teaching process in schools and on campuses play significant role in eliminating such acts.[]

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⁹⁰ Sulyana, "Interview."

⁹¹ Muhammad, "Interview."

⁹² Ramdhani, "Interview."

⁹³ Sarah, "Interview."

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