



JURNAL KAJIAN KEPENDIDIKAN ISLAM

<https://ejournal.uinsaid.ac.id/index.php/at-tarbawi>

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS *WASATIYYAH* COURSE: A CASE STUDY IN UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

Nurhalimah Siregar¹, Muhammad Abdul Aziz²

¹Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia, ²Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, Indonesia

E-mail: ¹nurhalimah.siregar@uiii.ac.id, ²azizahmad680@gmail.com

Abstract

Keywords:

Wasatiyyah Islam, Moderation, Islamic Education, Tolerance, and Harmony

The Islamic concept of wasatiyyah is reflected in the Qur'an that states the Muslim community as ummatan wasatan. It means that Muslim should be in the middle path in many aspects of live, which avoid from the extremist and neglecting. In doing so, education plays a significant role to promote the concept of wasatiyyah. However, its neglected from the teaching and learning of Islamic education. This study aimed to explore the implementation of wasatiyyah course in Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia. The study conducted qualitatively with a case study research design in investigating students' perspectives on the wasatiyyah course. A total of four participants from different faculties and countries are participated in this study. The data was collected through semi-structured interview and analyzed with the Miles and Huberman framework. Overall, the result of the study shows that student perceive positively towards the course of wasatiyyah Islam. In addition, the study also demonstrates students' reflection on the practice of the concept wasatiyyah in plural context. Hence, it recommended reimagining the concept of wasatiyyah in Islamic universities by implementing the idea into course subject to promote the tolerance and harmony within the diversity.

INTRODUCTION

Diversity in various aspects of life such as culture, language, and religion is an affluence that might embrace differences or even segregation. For example, there are many theological schools in Islam and some of them exist nowadays and some of them are destroyed. The theological school that still exists today such as *Sunni*, *Syiah*, and *Sufi*, and each of these theological schools have distinctive characteristics and perspectives in terms of belief. Furthermore, in *Sunni*, three theological schools that exist today such as *As'ari*, *Maturidi*, and *Athari*, which are different theological principles in terms of belief or *Aqidah* and *Faith*. Additionally, *Sunni* has four schools of thought namely, *Hanafi*, *Maliki*, *Syafi'i*, and *Hambali*, which have different understandings and interpretations of the Qur'an and *Hadist* on the implementation of Islamic laws (*Syariah*). Therefore, by understanding of such different theological schools and Islamic of thought, it is crucial to understand the concept of *wasatiyyah* or moderation and its significances

However, the concept of moderation was somehow abandoned especially in the teaching and learning of Islamic education (Kamali, 2015). This case the significant effects in some aspects of life such as unbalancing in practicing the *ibadah*, social conflict, and inequality. Furthermore, the misunderstanding and negligence of the concept of moderation also can hinder and prohibiting the harmony within cultures and theological schools. Thus, the knowledge and understanding of the concept of moderation it's significant in order to promote justice and harmony. Also, it develops a social, economic, cultural, and Islamic civilization as well.

The example of diversity in theological school above might create differences and conflict. For instance, the phenomena of radicalism and intolerance in the field of education like university. A quantitative study conducted by Baedowi & Chamadi, (2023) found that around 27 students from 576 participants at university claimed that there were organizations at campus that affiliated with radicalism. In addition, 3 participants stated that they followed banned organizations and 0,5% of the participants agreed on suicide bomb. It shows that the radicalism and extremist are exist nowadays, especially in the higher educations.

Furthermore, according to Institute for economics and peace (IEP) as cited in (Ridwan & Abdurrahim, 2023) reported that Indonesia at the biggest four country that effected terrorism. Meanwhile in global context, Indonesia is in the 37th rank out of 135 countries. The report shows that the practice of terrorism impact significantly within the country, even

threaten the security of a country. It also emphasizes on the importance of preventing and countering the terrorism, radicalism, and extremism.

Higher education level like university plays significant role to reduce the effect of terrorism by encouraging and improving students' understanding on the importance of harmony and tolerance (Afrianty, 2012). In this case, the students at university are often as a main target of radical and extremist ideologies. Thus, it is crucial to protect the young generations from propaganda such ideologies by promoting the concept of moderation and tolerance (Basit, 2016). Additionally, other problems such as interreligious conflicts (Ridwan & Abdurrahim, 2023) in several universities that caused by religious differences within the students, or between student and lecturer. This is also proving that young generation are in need to raise their action, thought, and personality to develop the integrity by development an attitude of tolerance among various religious communities on campus. In doing so, it starts by integrating the concept of moderation, tolerance, and interfaith discourse into curriculum. So, young generation can think critically and become an agent of change that protects the unity in national level from segregations.

The integration of religious moderation in the university level was promoted according to the Decree of the General Director of Islamic Education number 102 of 2019 (Ridwan & Abdurrahim, 2023). In this context, the policy emphasizes on the implementation of Islamic religion into the curriculum. So, students at the university are expected to learn and understand the religion including the concept of moderation and its practice.

However, most of the universities integrate the concept of moderation into Islamic subject rather implement it in the special course like *wasatiyyah* course at Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII). In this case, UIII implement the *wasatiyyah* course as a foundation subject which is mandatory for all students at the university. Furthermore, none of the studies explore on student' perceptions on the implementation if moderation class in higher education level. Hence, this paper aims to fill the gap by exploring on students' perspectives towards the *wasatiyyah* class as a foundation course in the university with the following research questions:

1. What are international students' perceptions towards the course of *Wasatiyyah* Islam in Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia?
2. How do international students reflect the concept of *Wasatiyyah* Islam in pluralistic society?

The purpose of the study is to explore the students' view and experiences towards the implementation of the *wasatiyyah* class in the university. Consequently, this paper will contribute significantly to reimagining the concept of *wasatiyyah* and its practice in education field. Also, this study will spread and recommend on the implementation of *wasatiyyah* Islam as a course within Islamic universities. In addition, this paper will promote the concept and the practice of tolerance, harmony, and balance in many aspects of However, despite the existence of this policy, its implementation remains inadequate, creating a significant gap. This study explores students' perspectives on the wasatiyyah course at UIII to address this gap and provide empirical insights on how the concept of moderation can be better implemented in higher education, helping to reduce radicalism and social conflict

Literature Review

Although almost all groups subscribe to the concept of religious moderation occupying a very important position in the life of a Muslim individual, one way one must take it into account in attempts to implement it amidst the community is hence to provide enough room for it to be implemented in the curriculum taught at various levels of Islamic educational institutions. For education, with its various types and methods, serves as a platform where educated people – a small group of a large society – are educated and molded and they are the ones who will then have an impact on society in a wider and more diverse context. In this way, it is hoped that the dissemination and implementation of religious moderation will be much more effective and efficient.

In the Indonesian context, through large projects that have been launched since 2019 (Hanafi, et al, 2022; Tim Kelompok Kerja Moderasi Beragama Kementerian Agama RI, 2020; Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019a, 2019b), the Government has paid immense attention to the implementation of religious moderation. This seems to be the reason why there is so much attention, especially from the circles of scholars – including from the general public – towards this concept. However, in the context of this research's literature review, not all works on religious moderation can be thus included here. Considering the title of this research which seeks to sew the thread of connection between religious moderation and education, this literature review section may only need to mention and briefly review several selected research works that include at least two elements within themselves: religious moderation and education.

Among those that can be mentioned here is *Keeping the middle path: mainstreaming religious moderation through Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia* carried out by Muhammad Nasir and Muhammad Khairul Rijal (Nasir & Rijal, 2021). This research takes case studies of three large institutions known in the Islamic higher education landscape in Indonesia, namely UIN Malik Ibrahim Malang, Darussalam Gontor University Ponorogo, and Ma'had Ali As'adiyah South Sulawesi. Among the conclusions mentioned in this work is that the model of religious moderation applied in the three institutions has one thing in common: a leaning to a spirit of eclecticism. Meaning, in each institution mentioned, various teaching materials considered suitable, best, and supportive for the implementation of its respective vision and mission, are selected and included in the curriculum. It is this that ultimately gives birth to several indicators of religious moderation such as the spirit of nationalism, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation of local wisdom.

Compared to the present research which also examines the relationship between religious moderation and education, both research do have similarities. Among them is, to be sure, that they share two variables in discussion: religious moderation and education. In addition, both also set as case studies one and/or several educational institutions that have formal academic activities and also non-formal dormitory life. However, what differentiates the two is that the UIII, which is the present research's case study, may be different in several aspects compared to the three institutions studied by Nasir's research. At a relatively young age, with the full support of the government, the UIII has been quite successful in declaring itself a vibrant, modern, and open Islamic university. Based on this difference, it can be clearly seen that the case study of the implementation of religious moderation education at the UIII would not be found in Nasir's research, so its presence is very important to know.

Including research in connection with religious moderation education that is worth noting here is an article written by Benny Afwadzi and Miski with the title *Religious Moderation in Indonesian Higher Educations: Literature Review* (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021). This research can be deemed to be quite comprehensive because it was designed as a literature review that collects and reviews various research results regarding the relationship between religious moderation and the implementation of the existing education system in various higher education institutions in Indonesia. It sought to emphasize that the spirit of religious moderation is part of the core and therefore cannot be separated from Islamic teachings themselves. Furthermore, by emphasizing the influence of various trans-national religious organizations such as *al-Ikhtwan al-Muslimun* (Muslim Brotherhood) and *Hizbut Tahrir*

Indonesia (HTI) on various campuses, it is concluded that among the indicators of religious moderation that an Indonesian higher educational institution must have is a commitment to nationalism, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodating local culture..

Even though it is quite comprehensive in presenting and analyzing data, this research did not mention how religious moderation education is implemented in the UIII environment. This is quite reasonable because, in that year, the UIII had just opened its educational program. For information, even though it was founded in 2016, this university's physical construction only started in 2018 and the opening of the first class was only held in 2021. Therefore, it would be very logical if the research written by Afwadzi did not cover the development of religious moderation education at the UIII at all. For this reason, a study that attempts to capture these developments as the present research does deserves attention.

Another research also worth reviewing here is a book recently published in 2023: *Religious Moderation Education* by Heri Gunawan (Gunawan, 2023). This work, which was originally the author's dissertation at the UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, is quite comprehensive in incorporating various aspects of religious moderation and relating them to the discourse of Islamic education. Taking two major Islamic boarding schools in West Java, i.e. Darussalam Ciamis and Cipasung Tasikmalaya as case studies, this research concluded that the religious moderation material implemented in those two institutions is intended to engender in the self of each student a tolerant mentality, namely not feeling the most righteous in religion. This goal is then reportedly achieved with at least two approaches: theoretical and practical. The first is through teaching material in class while the second is through exemplary efforts in the lives of students and *kyai* (the chairman and central figure of the school).

Henri Gunawan's research has to do with the present research, namely in the sense that both are researching religious moderation education in Islamic educational institutions. However, it also needs to be clarified that even though both are Islamic educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic universities certainly have several differences. Among them is that if the two Islamic boarding schools, both Ciamis and Cipasung, tend to be local, then the UIII which is the present research's case study can be seen to be at a global level, combining academic activities in the classroom and student dormitory life where students from all over the world partake. This is one reason why the exploration of religious moderation education at the UIII was not found in Gunawan's research. Therefore, it is also interesting to know to what extent religious moderation education is formulated, taught,

and practiced in the UIII environment – which is the present research’s subject matter – that is also an Islamic education cluster in Indonesia.

Among other recent research carried out on how to implement religious moderation in educational institutions in Indonesia is an article written by Rahmadi and Hamdan with the title *Religious Moderation in the Context of Islamic Education: A Multidisciplinary Perspective and its Application in Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia* (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023) its diverse perspectives and approaches, the implications of religious moderation in education, and its practical implementation in Islamic educational institutions. Various perspectives on religious moderation education, including theological-normative, sociological, anthropological, and cross-cultural communication perspectives, are examined in detail. Normatively, religious moderation education is guided by the concept of “*wasathiyah*” (middle path. In general, this research emphasizes the importance of educational institutions in implementing religious moderation. To explore this, the author offers four approaches to how moderation can be understood: theology, sociology, anthropology, and cross-cultural communication. Theologically, moderation is understood under the umbrella concept of *wasathiyah* which is clearly mentioned in the Qur’an. Sociologically and anthropologically, moderation is defined as an individual Muslim’s efforts to socialize and acculturate with the surrounding community. From a cross-cultural communication perspective, a moderate Muslim is someone able to communicate well with those who have different cultures and traditions from themselves. The concept of religious moderation can then be applied in three Islamic education clusters, namely formal madrasas, Islamic boarding schools mostly called *pesantren*, and universities. It is also emphasized that the concept of religious moderation will be successful if it is not only taught in classrooms, but also included in the form of curriculum, both hidden and extracurricular activities.

Considering the wording of the title, this research does appear to offer a quite comprehensive analysis and exploration. For, it tried to depict various aspects of religious moderation implemented in Indonesia. However, for a journal article, this seems less effective – something that could be indeed achieved by writing a book or even an encyclopedia. Among the examples of ineffectiveness are the range of educational levels studied such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and universities. The result is, in the context of higher education, for example, the information provided is based more on DIKTIS (director general of Islamic higher institution) sources. Of course, this makes sense because DIKTIS is an organization that serves as an umbrella for many Islamic higher education institutions.

However, what then happens is generalization so that the information displayed is too general and lacks detail. This is simply because in Indonesia, each university has its own characteristics – despite their several similarities. Taking four perspectives, namely theology, sociology, anthropology, and cross-cultural communication, is also good. However, because it is too broad, there is no detailed background information for each of these perspectives and their relationship to religious moderation education in Indonesia. As a result, among the consequences of the too-general information conveyed, information regarding the implementation of religious moderation at the UIII could not also be found. Therefore, the presence of this research which focuses on the UIII as a case study deserves attention.

METHODS

This qualitative study employs a case study approach to understand students' perspectives on the wasatiyyah course at Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), qualitative methods are suitable for exploring complex scenarios. This study focuses on the perspectives and reflections of international students who have completed the wasatiyyah course. Four students from various faculties, ages, religions, and nationalities were selected through convenience sampling to ensure diverse representation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, providing flexibility to probe deeper into participants' views. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman framework, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Ensuring credibility and trustworthiness, the study employed member checking and triangulation techniques. (Thomas, 2011, p.513) defined case study in qualitative as follow:

“Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame – an object – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates.”

In doing so, I sought out international students who had completed the *wasatiyyah* course at the first semester. This because I believe hat I could benefit and learn from them even though they come from different background. To ensure that I had access to various perspectives, I made a point to select participants coming from different faculty, age, religion, and citizenship by convenience sample. In the end, four students were invited in person and by WhatsApp to participate in the study, and all gave consent.

In the end, four students were invited in person and by WhatsApp to participate in the study, and all gave consent. A total of four international students who had completed the course of *wasatiyyah* participated in this study. These participants represented various fields of study, including education and economics, and came from different backgrounds in terms of age, religion, and citizenship. The participants were:

1. A master's student in the Faculty of Education, first semester, a Muslim holding Thai citizenship.
2. A non-Muslim female student from Nigeria, currently a master's student at the Faculty of Economics.
3. An Indonesian female student at the Faculty of Islamic Studies.
4. An Indonesian female student at the Faculty of Social Science.

Each participant agreed to participate in a 30-minute interview, during which they described their understanding, perceptions, and experiences towards the *wasatiyyah* course. Additionally, they shared their expectations for the improvement of the *wasatiyyah* course in the future."

"For the first research question regarding students' perspective towards *wasatiyyah* course, I constructed three questions to gain the answers. These questions include:

1. What was your understanding of the concept of *wasatiyyah* before coming to the current university?
2. What are your perspectives on the implementation of the *wasatiyyah* course as a mandatory course?
3. How do you perceive the materials provided in the *wasatiyyah* course?

Next, two questions were constructed to gain answers for the second research question regarding students' reflections on their understanding of the concept of *wasatiyyah* within the context of diversity:

1. How has your understanding of *wasatiyyah* evolved after taking the course?
2. How do you reflect on the concept of *wasatiyyah* in relation to the diverse backgrounds of students in the course?"

The data was analyzed using the content analysis method developed by Miles and Huberman (Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum 2016) in three phases: data reduction, data display, and verification. **Data Reduction:** This step involved summarizing, selecting, and focusing the data related to students' perceptions towards the *wasatiyyah* course. All interview

transcripts were read multiple times to identify significant statements and themes. **Data Display:** In this phase, the organized data was displayed in a structured format, such as matrices or tables, to facilitate understanding of the overall results and to help in planning the next steps of analysis. The themes and sub-themes identified were visually presented to provide a clear view of the findings. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification:** Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the displayed data and verifying the consistency and validity of the findings. This involved cross-checking with the initial research questions and ensuring that the conclusions were supported by the data collected.

HASIL PENELITIAN DAN PEMBAHASAN

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the interview are presented using two main research questions given earlier: 1) what are international students' perceptions towards the course of *Wasatiyyah* Islam in Islamic university? 2) How do international students reflect the concept of *Wasatiyyah* Islam in pluralistic society? Each of research questions consists of sub questions in order to gain a comprehensive finding.

There are four participants joined in this study with different background of study, field of study, age, and citizenship. The first participant is a first-semester master's student in the Faculty of Education. She is a Muslim and holds Thai citizenship. The second participant is a non-Muslim female student from Nigeria, currently a master's student in the Faculty of Economics. The third participant is an Indonesian female student from the Faculty of Islamic Studies. The fourth participant is an Indonesian female student from the Faculty of Social Science. Overall, the participants represent all the faculties and as a reflection the diversity at UIII with different background of religion, culture, and identity.

First Research Question

What are international students' perceptions towards the course of Wasatiyyah Islam in Islamic university?

In the beginning of the interview, the participants were asked if they know the term *wasatiyyah* before enrolled in the university. The first student said that she just knows the term in Arabic but have no idea about the concept of *wasatiyyah*. In addition, the second participant, which is a non-Muslim student have no idea at all on the term of *wasatiyyah*

before coming to UIII. On the other hand, the third student which is has an Islamic education background already knows and understand the *wasatiyyah*, so for her the *wasatiyyah* class like repeating what she learns before at the bachelor's degree. However, the last student knows that the term of *wasatiyyah* was liberal perception before she enrolled to UIII.

The result shows that the term of *wasatiyyah* Islam or moderate Islam is unfamiliar term for some students for some factors. First, lack of informations towards the term of *wasatiyyah*. Secondly, the effect of political and social aspects in spreading the religious issues dominantly. even it was manipulated to emerge some polarization, hence the information of *wasatiyyah* was neglected with political and social conflicts. Thirdly, lack of information in education field (Kamali, 2015).

In the context of Indonesia, the term of *wasatiyyah* Islam was popular since it was promoted by the ministry of religious affairs for year ago. In addition, since Indonesia known with the biggest population of Muslim which is give advantage to broadcast the term to Indonesian people. However, the promotion process still finds the challenges especially in education field.

Table 1. What is your understanding on the concept of *wasatiyyah* Islam after taking the course?

Participants	Interview Quotations
1	"...the basic concept of <i>wasatiyyah</i> Islam was moderate or balance, and how become a moderate Muslim..."
2	"... <i>wasatiyyah</i> Islam is moderation how to avoid extremism, also how to life in unity in our modern live, also how citizen can be corporate to avoid the segregation..."
3	"... I am practicing that concept in this university, and now I can distinguish people that practicing the <i>wasatiyyah</i> Islam and those who do not practicing..."
4	"... it is a middle path for being a Muslim to practice their religion by appreciate the differences views with others..."

Table 1. above shows on students' understanding towards the concept of *wasatiyyah* Islam after taking the course for one semester. Their perspectives on the idea of *wasatiyyah* Islam is moderation, balance, and middle position between different points of views. This is in link with the definition of *wasatiyyah* Islam which is a moderation or middle position between two extremities. In addition, in the Arabic language *wasatiyyah* means *tawassut*, *iqtisad*, *I'tidal*, and *tawazun* (Kamali, 2015). Interestingly, the third participant stated that UIII gives her opportunities to practice the concept within the diversity. This is because she

learns *wasatiyyah* Islam at her bachelor's degree. Overall, it can be said that students learn something from the course, understand, and practice the concept of *wasatiyyah* Islam.

Table 2. How you see the implementation of *wasatiyyah* course as mandatory subject at UIII?

Participants	Interview Quotations
1	<i>"... it's a positive step to broaden our understanding on the values of wasatiyyah Islam and balancing in Islam. That help to create the moderate perspectives and inclusive in the aspect of live..."</i>
2.	<i>"... I think its effective implementation to help students to balance in whatever is the field..."</i>
3	<i>"...Its good for international university like UIII and not all the students are Muslim, to learn something new..."</i>
4	<i>"... I agreed and I dont have problem on that..."</i>

Table 2 demonstrates the positive perspectives from four participants on the implementation of *wasatiyyah* class as the mandatory subject for all students at UIII. It also shows that they in need to that course in order to welcome the diversity at the campus. Especially in this era of globalization, there are several extremist and radical groups such as Jemaah Islam (JI) which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda, Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), and Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD) (Ridwan & Abdurrahim, 2023). Thus, the *wasatiyyah* course is crucial, so that students able to distinguish such groups.

In addition, the finding shows that from the *wasatiyyah* class they understood the notion of diversity and how to emberece it into daily life. Following that, the first participant said that before she was fell strange to the non-Muslim people, then after learn *wasatiyyah* she can communicate and able to work together with the different believe in the class. This links to the concept of moderation by Rahmadi & Hamdan (2023) based cross-cultural communication and social lens. That moderation can be understood by communicating and socializing by surrounding community. Also, from the cross-cultural communication perspective, moderation can be defined that individual able to communicate with different culture and believe.

Table 3. What you learn from the *wasatiyyah* class?

Participants	Interview Quotations
1	<i>"...such the concept of moderate Islam from other countries like Gambia and Nigeria. We learn some important issues or challenges in moderate Islam..."</i>
2.	<i>"...introduction the concept, organizations, and practice of wasatiyyah from other countries..."</i>
3	<i>"... the definitions of wasatiyyah from traditional books (kutubut thuros), and wasatiyyah from different perspectives of Islamic organizations such Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah..."</i>
4	<i>"...Understanding Islam, perspectives from outside Islam, history of Wasatiyah, organizations in Indonesia..."</i>

Table 3. above asking the participants about the material they learn for *wasatiyyah* class. It can be seen that the learning materials almost similar for all faculties and level of study at UIII. It includes the definition of the term *wasatiyyah*, its theology, the concept of *wasatiyyah* Islam and its practice from several perspectives and countries. Consequently, by the end of the class, students are expected to understand of *wasatiyyah* Islam in-depth, recognize the characteristics of *wasatiyyah* Islam, and also identify some issues and challenges of the *wasatiyyah* practice. In my opinion, the learning material such as broad set and comprehensive materials that broadens students' understanding on the concept.

In addition, during the interview session, we asked the participants about the teaching methods used in the class. The first, second, and four participants used English as the instruction language in the classroom. The class conducted offline for most of time and the teaching methods used are presentation, discussion, and assignments. However, the last participant said that the class was quite boring and less interactive because it used presentation from the first meeting up till the last meeting. Meanwhile, the third participant use Arabic as the instructional language in the classroom since she is at the faculty of Islamic studies. Also, she stated that the references used in *wasatiyyah* class mostly from the traditional books or *kutubut thuros*. This shows that the process of teaching and learning focused on student centre learning which is provides advantages for students to gain more information, knowledge, and experiences.

Table 4. Do you think the materials in *wasatiyyah* course relevance to your daily life?

Participants	Interview Quotations
1	"...such the concept of moderate Islam from other countries like Gambia and Nigeria..."
2.	"... it suits to the context of UIII..."
3	"...balancing physically and spritually..."
4	"...Yes, it's very relevance like having a classmate with different belief, so we can manage our attitude and welcome the diversity..."

Table 4 above discuss on students' point of views regarding the relevance of *wasatiyyah's* materials to the participants' daily live. In this context, the term of daily live refers to the student live within the diversity at the university. By understand the definition of *wasatiyyah* such as *tawassut*, *iqtisad*, *I'tidal*, and *tawazun*, students develop their attitudes and welcome the diversity inside and outside the campus. Hence, it creates such harmony and avoid from segregation in the society.

The quotations above show that the *wasatiyyah* course its (its or is?) applicable in the context of UIII. One of materials discussed in the *wasatiyyah* class is about the practices of *wasatiyyah* Islam in some countries. In this case, the international student can present the information and practice of moderation based on their country. As a result, it broadens their understanding towards the *wasatiyyah* Islam.

Additionally, the *wasatiyyah* class also discuss issues and challenges in the practice of *wasatiyyah* Islam. For example, the issue on factors that may weaken religious moderation like the conservative religious doctrines in some Islamic school in Indonesia (Zuhdi, 2018). Also, the lack of religious literacy among Indonesian people that cause some problems in the society like multiculturalism, tolerance, and prejudice (Zuhdi, 2020). Thus, by knowing and understanding the current issues and problems, students can update their information and insights. This result can be recommendation for other university to implement the *wasatiyyah* course into the curriculum.

Second Research Question

How do international students reflect the concept of Wasatiyyah Islam (the terminology should be clear of whether it adheres to Arabic transliteration (wasatiyyat al-Islam) or English strcuture (wasatiyyah of Islam)) in pluralistic society?

Table 5. Does *wasatiyyah* course have an impact on the way you practice your religion?

Participants	Interview Quotations
1	"...I was felt like indoctrinated with the concept of <i>wasatiyyah</i> ..."
2.	"... <i>wasatiyyah</i> does not (have) any impact on the way I practice my religion..."
3	"...No, it's (the) same for me..."
4	"...Yes, its effects on (it affects the way) the way I practice my belief..."

Table 5 above to see the students' views on the effect of *wasatiyyah* class towards the way they practice their religions. Two participants claim that it was affected on the practice of their beliefs. The first participant said that somehow she felt indoctrinated by the concept of *wasatiyyah*. This often happens to her because her background of study was in *pesantren* (boarding school) which different from the knowledge she just learns at UIII. Before, in *pesantren* she perceived the traditional understanding of Islam which is quite strict in terms of social activities with other belief. In result, make her keep rethinking about the concept. In this case, it could happen to other students which are come from *pesantren* background as well. Firstly, in the context of *pesantren* which is all the students are Muslims and they used to it. Hence, they have no experience to meet and communicate with other religion. Secondly, they used to learn and practice only the Islamic knowledge from Al-quran and *Hadits*. Thus, they tend more too strict on their belief rather to moderate. As a result, the *wasatiyyah* class look like indoctrination for some students. That is why the *wasatiyyah* should make students understand the concept of *wasatiyyah* and its practice in depth, so they do not feel in doubt anymore.

On the other hand, the last participant claims that *wasatiyyah* class change (changes) her mind towards it concept (its concept). Before she perceived that *wasatiyyah* Islam was radical term that called as *Islam Nusantara*. After she took *wasatiyyah* course, she knows the true definitions and knowledge taht based on Al-quran and Sunnah. So it became a positive impact for her. Consequently, it can be said that the *wasatiyyah* course give a postive impact for student at UIII.

The second and the third participants stated that there is no impact of *wasatiyyah* course on the way they practice their beliefs. The second participant claims that her belief also teaches such tolerance and balance knowledge. Also, she said that *wasatiyyah* is one direction which is avoiding the extremist and assurance the moderation. The concept is generally accepted and its widely practiced in her religion. so, it's not a problem in the

way she practices her religion. Meanwhile, the third participant with the experiences before comes to UIII in both knowledge and practice, so she felt that *wasatiyyah* class had no impact on her activities. However, in term of social interaction, she stated that *wasatiyyah* give her a positive effect to be a wise person that always in the middle position. Overall, it can be said that there are two impacts on students' belief towards the *wasatiyyah* concepts which are positive and negative impacts.

Table 6. How do you reflect the concept of *Wasatiyyah* Islam in pluralistic society?

Participants	Interview Quotations
1	"...I reflect that from <i>wasatiyyah</i> I know that we no need to limiting our self from the non-Muslim friend and make our-self become balance and to be friends with them..."
2.	"...it promotes the harmony, for instance in the case of UIII, students from other background can live peacefully without any segregation or rejection, so everyone is given an equal privilege to experience individual in the university..."
3	"... it reflects to be balance between physically and spiritually..."
4	"... it reflects on my attitude become more friendship..."

Table 6 illustrates on student's reflection toward *wasatiyyah* class within the diversity. The four participants have a positive reflection in some aspects of life. It also showing the advantage of learning *wasatiyyah* Islam especially in the context of pluralistic society. It is a nature to life in the plurality and people cannot avoid it. For example, in the classroom, it must a multiplicity like gander, age, economic, and perspectives. Furthermore, different individual will have difference mind and characteristics. Consequently, the sense of openness is need in order to life in harmony and respectfully.

UIII as a real picture of inclusivity and heterogeneity shows the picture of tolerance and openmindness towards the differences. In this case, the first participant shared her experience, since she has non-Muslim friends in the class, she used to interact with them and welcoming their views. She also noticed that her attitudes such thrifty and not extravagance in term of financial shows the concept of *wasatiyyah* in Islam.

While, from the non-Muslim point of view reveals the equality for all individuals in the university. In this case, she felt that she is respected and appreciated with others, even though she is minority in the class. In the discussion, she said that Indonesian people are friendly compared to other countries. That is why she felt safety and comfortable to stay in dormitory of the campus.

In addition, based on the third participant's experience in practicing the concept of *wasatiyyah* at the university. She able to balance in many aspects of life includes physically and spiritually. For example, in practicing the idea of *wasatiyyah* class she changed her perspective to those who strict in doing prayer (*ibadah*). It means that she is become wise and stops to labelling someone which is have different view with her. This positive impact should be spread widely, so the practice of labelling or classifying of someone or groups can be avoided.

Moreover, the last participant reflected that she understands and learn diversity from the *wasatiyyah* class. This is because the materials in *wasatiyyah* also provide some discussion on different culture and tradition of countries that presented by international students in her class. As a result, it affected to her attitude to welcome the multicultural awareness.

Table. 7 What is your recommendation for this course in the future?

Participants	Interview Quotations
1	'...more explanation and practice on the concept of tolerance...'
2.	"...I expect a continue positive impact from the <i>wasatiyyah</i> class..."
3	"...the material should involve some phenomena as reasons for <i>wasatiyyah</i> class as foundation subject at UIII..."
4	"...the teaching method should be varied, so student will not feel bored by the presentations only..."

The last table above displaying on students' expectation towards the *wasatiyyah* class in the next semester. It also as the recommendations for lecturers and administration to consider improving the quality of the teaching and learning *wasatiyyah* course at UIII. Overall, it includes teaching material, teaching methods, and facilitations.

First, in terms of teaching material, the *wasatiyyah* course should be more relevance that includes the uptodate issues regarding moderation and it challenges. In doing so, lecturers can provide the material such as article from the international journal and various data base. Secondly, mix methods of teaching are needed in order to create an inclusive learning environment. For example, by varying the activities such as game to encourage students' participations in classroom. In addition, the assessment can be replaced from the paper-based method to project-based method.

CONCLUSION

Education plays a significant role in reimagining the concept of wasatiyyah in Islam, which has been neglected in Islamic education. Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia serves as an example by implementing the concept of wasatiyyah as a mandatory course for all students at the university. The study results provide evidence of the positive effects of this implementation. Firstly, students exhibit a positive attitude towards understanding the principles and challenges related to wasatiyyah. Secondly, students reflect positively on practicing wasatiyyah Islam in diverse settings. In conclusion, it is recommended to integrate the study of wasatiyyah Islam into the Islamic curriculum for sustainability and further development of the discussed concept

REFERENCES

- Afrianty, D. (2012). Islamic education and youth extremism in Indonesia. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 7(2), 134-146. DOI:10.1080/18335330.2012.719095
- Afwadzi, B., & Miski, M. (2021). Literature Review Religious Moderation in Indonesian Higher Educations: Literature Review. *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam*, 22(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v22i2.13446>
- Al-Qaradawi, Y. (2010). *Fiqh al-Wasatiyyah al-Islamiyah wa-al-Tajdid: Ma'alim wa-Manarat*. Dar al-Shuruq
- Basit, A. (2016). The ideological fragmentation of Indonesian Muslim students and da'wa movements in the postreformed era. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 6(2), 185-208. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v6i2.185-208>
- Baedowi, M., & Chamadi, M. R. (2023). Sikap Moderasi Beragama mahasiswa di Universitas Jenderal Soedirman Purwokerto. *INJIRE*, 1(2), 191-200.
- Gunawan, H. (2023). *Pendidikan Moderasi Beragama: Vol. I (1; Issue 1)*. CV. Alfabeta. <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/69088/>
- Hanafi, et al, M. M. (2022). *Tafsir Tematik Moderasi Beragama*. Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an.
- Kamali, M. Hasyim. 2015. *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 9-15. DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190226831.001.0001
- Nasir, M., & Rijal, M. K. (2021). Keeping the middle path: Mainstreaming religious moderation through Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 11(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.213-241>

- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Weinbaum, R. K. (2016). Mapping Miles and Huberman's Within-Case and Cross-Case Analysis Methods onto the Literature Review Process. *Journal of Educational Issues*, 2(1), 265-288. DOI:10.5296/jei.v2i1.9217
- Rahmadi, R., & Hamdan, H. (2023). RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE AND ITS APPLICATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA. *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora*, 21(1), 59-82. <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v21i1.8487>
- Ridwan, I., & Abdurrahim, A. (2023). Persepsi dan Pengamalan Moderasi Beragamat dalam Mengembangkan Sikap Sosio-Religius dan Toleransi Beragama di Perguruan Tinggi Umum. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter JAWARA (Jujur, Adil, Wibawa, Amanah, Religius, Akuntabel)*, 9(1).
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). Basics of qualitative research techniques.
- Thomas, G. (2011). A typology for the case study in social science following a review of definition, discourse, and structure. *Qualitative inquiry*, 17(6), 511-521.
- Tim Kelompok Kerja Moderasi Beragama Kementerian Agama RI. (2020). *Peta Jalan (Roadmap) Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Tahun 2020 – 2024*. Kementerian Agama RI.
- Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. (2019a). *Moderasi Beragama*. Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI.
- Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. (2019b). *Tanya Jawab Moderasi Beragama*. Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI
- Zuhdi, M. (2018). Challenging moderate Muslims: Indonesia's Muslim schools in the midst of religious conservatism. *Religions*, 9(10), 310. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9100310>
- Zuhdi, M., & Sarwenda, S. (2020). Recurring Issues in Indonesia's Islamic Education: The Needs for Religious Literacy. *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion*, 5(01), 1-13. [10.18784/analisa.v5i1.1038](https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v5i1.1038)

Students' Perspectives Towards Wasatiyyah Course: A Case Study In Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia
Nurhalimah Siregar, Muhammad Abdul Aziz