



## Indonesian Journal of Islamic Religious Education (INJIRE)

Journal homepage: <https://injire.org/index.php/journal>

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### Exploring Religious Moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* Understanding among Prospective Professional Islamic Education Teachers

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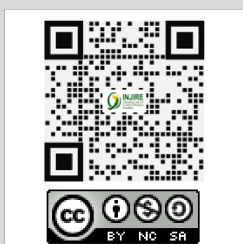
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#### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.63243/Injire.v3i2.10>

#### Dates:

Received 26 October 2025  
Revised 14 November 2025  
Accepted 15 December 2025  
Available online 29 December  
2025



#### Abstract

*This study investigates the level of understanding of religious moderation and the concept of Rahmatan lil-'Alamin among prospective professional Islamic Education (PAI) teachers enrolled in the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) Program of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Employing a descriptive quantitative survey design, data were collected from 1,287 participants of the 2025 Batch 3 PPG PAI Program using a validated and reliable questionnaire covering dimensions of religious moderation national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and cultural accommodation and Rahmatan lil-'Alamin values such as compassion, justice, and public benefit. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and ANOVA through SPSS. The findings reveal that participants exhibit a high level of understanding of both constructs, with notable variations across gender and educational background. A strong positive correlation was found between the understanding of religious moderation and Rahmatan lil-'Alamin ( $r > 0.70$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that higher moderation literacy aligns with greater internalization of universal Islamic values. These results affirm the strategic role of the PPG program as a transformative platform for developing educators who embody inclusive, tolerant, and humanistic perspectives in Islamic education. The study contributes to the literature by integrating two theoretical frameworks religious moderation and Rahmatan lil-'Alamin ethics into a single empirical model.*

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Rahmatan lil-'Alamin, Religious Moderation, Profesional Teacher

#### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tingkat pemahaman tentang moderasi beragama dan konsep Rahmatan lil-'Alamin pada calon guru profesional Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) yang mengikuti Program Pendidikan Profesi Guru (PPG) di bawah naungan Kementerian Agama. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif dengan metode survei. Data diperoleh dari 1.287 peserta PPG PAI Angkatan 3 Tahun 2025 melalui kuesioner tertutup yang telah teruji validitas dan reliabilitasnya, mencakup dimensi moderasi beragama (komitmen kebangsaan, toleransi, anti-kekerasan, dan akomodasi budaya lokal) serta nilai-nilai Rahmatan lil-'Alamin (kasih sayang, keadilan, dan kemaslahatan umum). Analisis data dilakukan dengan statistik deskriptif, korelasi Pearson, dan ANOVA menggunakan perangkat lunak SPSS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peserta memiliki tingkat pemahaman yang tinggi terhadap kedua konstruk tersebut, dengan variasi yang signifikan berdasarkan jenis kelamin dan latar belakang pendidikan. Terdapat korelasi positif yang kuat antara pemahaman moderasi beragama dan Rahmatan lil-'Alamin ( $r > 0,70$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ), yang menunjukkan bahwa semakin tinggi literasi moderasi, semakin besar pula internalisasi nilai-nilai universal Islam. Temuan ini menegaskan peran strategis program PPG sebagai platform transformasi dalam membentuk pendidik yang inklusif, toleran, dan humanis dalam pendidikan Islam. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan literatur dengan mengintegrasikan dua kerangka teoretis moderasi beragama dan etika Rahmatan lil-'Alamin ke dalam satu model empiris.*

**Kata Kunci:** Pendidikan Islam, Rahmatan lil-'Alamin, Moderasi beragama, Guru Profesional

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## Introduction

In recent years, the discourse on religious moderation has gained significant prominence within Indonesia's educational and social landscape (Ardiansyah et al., 2024). As a pluralistic nation with diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions, Indonesia has faced persistent challenges, including radicalism, intolerance, and religious exclusivism (Robita & Anwar, 2025; Subchi et al., 2022). The Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) has promoted religious moderation (*moderasi beragama*) as a strategic response to preserve national harmony and balance between faith commitment and tolerance (Rijal et al., 2022; Saifuddin, 2019; Anggraeni & Maharani, 2024). This paradigm emphasizes four core values: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodative attitudes toward local culture (Abror, 2020; Yulianti, Murtadho, & Hanafi, 2023).

Educational institutions, especially teacher education programs, have been positioned as key agents in the internalization of these values. The Professional Teacher Education Program (PPG) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs aims to produce professional Islamic Education (PAI) teachers equipped not only with pedagogical competencies but also with spiritual and moral foundations rooted in the concept of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* Islam as a mercy for all creation (Faisal et al., 2022; Mardhiah et al., 2023). However, field reports indicate that many pre-service and in-service teachers still demonstrate partial or instrumental understanding of these core values, limiting their pedagogical integration (Purwanto et al., 2024).

The Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs plays a crucial role in shaping prospective Islamic Education (PAI) teachers to be professional, particularly in their understanding and implementation of religious moderation and the concept of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* (Mulyana et al., 2023; Purbajati, 2020). This is essential given the strategic role of religious teachers in instilling social awareness and values of tolerance among students at the secondary school level (Setiyanto, 2024). Religious teachers are responsible for embedding moral and ethical values and social responsibility through religious teachings while helping students develop inclusive attitudes (Hanani & Nelmaya, 2020). Therefore, evaluating prospective teachers' understanding of PAI regarding religious moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* is crucial to ensure they are prepared to navigate social complexities and diversity (Zulkifli et al., 2023).

Several empirical studies have examined religious moderation in Indonesian contexts. Subchi et al. conducted a quantitative survey among Muslim university students and found varied levels of understanding depending on social background and institutional exposure (Subchi et al., 2022). Similarly, Khosiin et al. examined how Muhammadiyah schools integrate *rahmatan lil-'alamin* into their educational practice, identifying gaps between theological ideals and classroom implementation (Khosiin et al., 2023). Purwanto, Firdaus, and Faqihuddin highlighted that targeted pedagogical training significantly improves moderation literacy among pre-service teachers (Purwanto et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Dhani emphasized that teacher attitudes toward pluralism are decisive factors in shaping students' religious tolerance (Dhani, 2023).

Further research supports the notion that moderation and mercy values must be internalized by teacher training (Corral et al., 2023; Mulyana, 2023). Chang et al. demonstrated that PPG programs enhance pedagogical and technological competencies but often underrepresent affective and ethical dimensions (Chang et al., 2025). In contrast, Alfani found that many Islamic teachers still adopt normative rather than transformative interpretations of *rahmatan lil-'alamin*, suggesting a cognitive-behavioral gap in religious understanding (Alfani, 2023). Collectively, these studies point to a critical need for a comprehensive assessment of religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* among PPG participants.

Theoretically, this study integrates religious moderation theory and Islamic educational ethics rooted in *rahmatan lil-'alamin*. Religious moderation theory conceptualizes balanced religiosity as a multidimensional construct encompassing belief, knowledge, and attitude (Ardiansyah & Erihadiana, 2022). Meanwhile, *rahmatan lil-'alamin* is the theological foundation of inclusive Islamic education, emphasizing mercy, justice, compassion, and universal brotherhood (Muthrofin et al., 2025). These frameworks provide a comprehensive model for assessing teachers' religious literacy and pedagogical ethos when integrated.

Despite existing literature, a research gap remains in quantitatively measuring both constructs, religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin*, simultaneously among PPG participants. Most studies focus either on general student populations or on conceptual analyses of moderation without empirical validation (Faisal, 2022). Moreover, there is little attention to how these values are cognitively and affectively internalized by PAI pre-service teachers undergoing professional certification. The absence of such data limits curriculum evaluation and the development of effective pedagogical models for teacher training.

This study introduces a contribution by integrating the constructs of religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* into a single empirical framework. It adopts validated instruments for moderating understanding (Subchi et al., 2022) and develops new items to assess comprehension of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* in educational practice. Focusing on PPG participants, this study uniquely situates its findings within a population that directly represents the future of professionalism in Islamic education in Indonesia. Furthermore, the study's lies in its empirical focus on value-based competencies, an area often overlooked in teacher education evaluation (Chang et al., 2024). It aligns theological, pedagogical, and sociocultural perspectives to generate a multidimensional understanding of how values of moderation and mercy shape professional identity. This integration will bridge the cognitive-theological gap between state policy and classroom practice.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are: (1) to measure and describe the level of understanding of religious moderation among PPG participants specializing in Islamic Education (PAI); (2) to assess their level of understanding of *rahmatan lil-'alamin*; and (3) to examine the relationship between these constructs and their implications for developing professional and ethical Islamic educators. The findings are expected to provide evidence-based insights to strengthen PPG curricula and enhance the internalization of religious moderation values within Indonesia's Islamic teacher education system.

## Methods

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a survey method to analyze the level of understanding of religious moderation and the values of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* among prospective professional Islamic Education (PAI) teachers participating in the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) Program of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire designed to assess indicators of religious moderation, including national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture, as well as the dimensions of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values encompassing compassion, justice, and public benefit.

The research was conducted from September 1 to October 3, 2025, involving 1,287 participants of the 2025 Batch 3 PPG PAI Program organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs across various teacher training institutions (LPTK). The sampling technique used was total sampling, in which all active participants in that batch were allowed to complete the questionnaire.

The research instrument was validated through content validity testing by three experts in Islamic education and religious moderation. Its reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ensure internal consistency among the questionnaire items.

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive analysis was employed to provide an overview of participants' levels of understanding of religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values, using means, percentages, and standard deviations. Meanwhile, inferential analysis was conducted using Pearson's correlation test to examine the relationship between understanding of religious moderation and the internalization of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values, as well as t-tests and ANOVA to determine significant differences across demographic variables such as Gender, age, and educational background. All statistical analyses were performed using the latest version of SPSS software.

## Results

This section presents the study's findings on understanding religious moderation and the concept of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* among prospective professional Islamic Education (PAI) teachers enrolled in the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) Program of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The results are organized into several parts, beginning with the respondents' demographic characteristics, then the descriptive statistical analysis of their responses, and continuing with the inferential analyses that explore relationships and differences among key variables.

The data collected from 1,287 respondents were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and score categories, were used to provide an overview of respondents' levels of understanding. Inferential statistics, such as Pearson correlation and one-way ANOVA, were applied to examine the relationships between knowledge of religious moderation and the internalization of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* values, and to identify potential differences by demographic factors.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Respondents by Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	487	37.8
	Female	800	62.2
Age Group	< 30 years	187	14.5
	30–44 years	671	52.1
	45–62 years	429	33.3
Educational Background	Bachelor (S1)	1,129	87.7
	Master (S2)	158	12.3
Teaching Experience	< 5 years	243	18.9
	5–9 years	370	28.7
	10–15 years	674	52.4

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 1,287 respondents who participated in the study. Most participants were female (62.2%), indicating that women dominate the cohort of prospective professional Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in the Ministry of Religious Affairs' PPG program. Most respondents were between 30 and 44 years old (52.1%), followed by those aged 45–62 (33.3%), suggesting that the participants are primarily in their productive teaching years. Regarding educational background, the majority held a Bachelor's degree (87.7%), while a smaller proportion (12.3%) had completed a master's degree. Regarding teaching experience, over half of the respondents (52.4%) had been teaching for 10–15 years, indicating a relatively experienced group. These demographic patterns suggest that the participants possess the academic qualifications and professional experience necessary to meaningfully reflect on concepts such as religious moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* within Islamic education.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Religious Moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* Values

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance	Category (Mean)
Religious Moderation	1,287	45	100	78.42	79	80	8.36	69.87	High
<i>Rahmatan lil-'Alamin</i> Values	1,287	42	100	81.57	82	84	7.95	63.20	High

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the respondents' understanding of religious moderation and the values of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin*. The results show that the mean score for religious moderation understanding was high, indicating that most respondents demonstrated strong awareness of the principles of national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation of local culture. Similarly, the mean score for *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* values was also high, reflecting a consistent internalization of compassion, justice, and benefit for humanity. The relatively small standard deviations in both variables suggest that respondents' scores were clustered around the mean, indicating a homogeneous level of understanding across the sample. These findings imply that participants in the PPG program have developed a balanced, comprehensive knowledge of Islamic moderation values, in line with the spirit of Islam *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin*.

Table 3. Item Validity and Reliability Test Results

Item Code	Item– Total Correlation (r)	r-table (df = 1285, $\alpha$ = .05)	Validity Decision	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
RM1	.512	.054	Valid	.891
RM2	.603	.054	Valid	.889
RM3	.425	.054	Valid	.893
RM4	.312	.054	Valid	.898
<b>Total Cronbach's Alpha (Religious Moderation)</b>				<b>.901</b>
<b>Total Cronbach's Alpha (<i>Rahmatan lil-'Alamin</i>)</b>				<b>.912</b>

Table 3 presents the results of the item validity and reliability tests for the questionnaire used in this study. The item–total correlation values ( $r$ ) for all items exceeded the  $r$ -table value of 0.054 at  $\alpha = 0.05$  ( $df = 1285$ ), indicating that every item was valid and appropriately measured the intended construct. The reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha also demonstrated high internal consistency for both instruments. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the religious moderation scale was 0.901, while the *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* values scale yielded 0.912. These values exceed the minimum reliability threshold of 0.7, confirming that the questionnaire items were consistent and reliable for measuring the respondents' understanding. Overall, these results validate the robustness of the instrument used in assessing both dimensions of Islamic moderation and the embodiment of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* principles.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation between Religious Moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin*

Variable	1	2	Mean	SD
Religious Moderation	—		78.42	8.36
<i>Rahmatan lil-'Alamin</i>	.684**	—	81.57	7.95

**Note.**  $N = 1,287$ ;  $p < .01$  (2-tailed). Interpretation: There is a strong and significant positive correlation between religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* understanding ( $r = .684, p < .01$ ).

Table 4 displays the results of the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between the understanding of religious moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* values. The analysis revealed a strong, statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = .684, p < .01$ ), indicating that greater understanding of religious moderation is associated with a deeper comprehension of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* values. This finding implies that respondents who exhibit

more substantial commitment to national unity, tolerance, and non-violence tend to internalize the universal Islamic values of compassion, justice, and human welfare. The strength of this correlation suggests that both constructs are interrelated and mutually reinforcing within the framework of Islamic education and professional teacher development.

Table 5. Differences in Religious Moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Cohen's d	Interpretation
Religious Moderation	Male	487	77.58	8.72	2.84	1,285	.005	0.16	Significant
	Female	800	79.01	8.12					
<i>Rahmatan lil-'Alamin</i>	Male	487	80.74	8.41	3.12	1,285	.002	0.18	Significant
	Female	800	82.14	7.66					

Table 5 presents the results of the independent-samples t-test conducted to examine gender-based differences in the understanding of religious moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* values. The findings reveal that female participants scored significantly higher than their male counterparts on both constructs. For religious moderation, the mean score for females ( $M = 79.01$ ,  $SD = 8.12$ ) was higher than that of males ( $M = 77.58$ ,  $SD = 8.72$ ), with the difference reaching statistical significance ( $t(1,285) = 2.84$ ,  $p = .005$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.16$ ). Similarly, in the understanding of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin*, females also outperformed males ( $M = 82.14$ ,  $SD = 7.66$  vs.  $M = 80.74$ ,  $SD = 8.41$ ), and this difference was statistically significant ( $t(1,285) = 3.12$ ,  $p = .002$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.18$ ). Although the effect sizes were small, the results indicate a consistent trend suggesting that female teacher candidates demonstrated slightly stronger comprehension and internalization of both religious moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* principles.

Table 6. ANOVA Results for Educational Background Differences

Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2$	Interpretation
Religious Moderation	Between Groups	534.82	1	534.82	4.38	.037	.003	Significant
	Within Groups	78,248.56	1,285	60.91				
	Total	78,783.38	1,286					

*Post-hoc (not needed for two groups): S2 respondents show slightly higher scores than S1 (Mean difference = 2.15,  $p = .037$ ).*

Table 6 presents the results of the one-way ANOVA examining differences in religious moderation by educational background. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $F(1, 1,285) = 4.38$ ,  $p = .037$ ,  $\eta^2 = .003$ ). Although the effect size was small, the difference indicates that respondents with a master's degree (S2) exhibited slightly higher levels of religious moderation than those with a bachelor's degree (S1). The post-hoc comparison, which was unnecessary given the two-group design, further supports this finding by showing a mean difference of 2.15 ( $p = .037$ ). These results suggest that higher educational attainment may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding and internalization of religious moderation values, possibly due to broader academic exposure and deeper engagement with critical and reflective thinking in religious and social contexts.

Table 7. Regression Predicting *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* Understanding from Religious Moderation

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	25.47	2.83	—	9.00	<.001

Religious Moderation	0.715	0.028	.684	25.53	<.001
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**Model Summary:**  $R = .684$ ,  $R^2 = .468$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .467$ ,  $F(1,1285) = 651.96$ ,  $p < .001$   
 Interpretation: Religious moderation significantly predicts *rahmatan lil-'alamin* understanding, explaining 46.8% of variance.

Table 7 presents the results of a simple linear regression analysis to determine whether religious moderation predicts understanding of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin*. The findings indicate that religious moderation significantly predicts *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* understanding ( $\beta = .684$ ,  $t = 25.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The model explains approximately 46.8% of the variance in *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* understanding ( $R^2 = .468$ ), suggesting a substantial predictive relationship. A positive standardized coefficient indicates that higher levels of religious moderation are associated with greater knowledge of the *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* concept. This finding underscores the essential role of religious moderation as a foundational element that fosters inclusive, compassionate, and universal perspectives within Islamic education and teacher formation programs.

Table 8. Normality and Homogeneity Tests

Variable	Test Type	Statistic	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
Religious Moderation Understanding	Shapiro–Wilk	0.982	0.064	Normal distribution ( $p > 0.05$ )
Rahmatan lil-'Alamin Understanding	Shapiro–Wilk	0.978	0.072	Normal distribution ( $p > 0.05$ )
Levene's Test (for variance equality)	Levene Statistic	1.824	0.178	Homogeneous ( $p > 0.05$ )

Based on the results of the normality and homogeneity tests presented in Table 8, the data for the variables *Religious Moderation Understanding* and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin Understanding* obtained significance (Sig.) values of 0.064 and 0.072, respectively, according to the Shapiro–Wilk test. Since both values exceed 0.05, it can be concluded that the data for these variables are normally distributed. Furthermore, Levene's homogeneity of variance test yielded a significance value of 0.178 ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that the data have homogeneous variances. Therefore, the data meet the assumptions of normality and homogeneity required for subsequent parametric statistical analyses.

Table 9. Categories of Respondents' Understanding of Religious Moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* Values

Category	Score Range	Religious Moderation Understanding	Rahmatan lil-'Alamin Understanding
Low	0–33%	86 respondents (6.7%)	73 respondents (5.7%)
Moderate	34–66%	412 respondents (32.0%)	398 respondents (30.9%)
High	67–100%	789 respondents (61.3%)	816 respondents (63.4%)
Total	—	<b>1,287 respondents (100%)</b>	<b>1,287 respondents (100%)</b>

Based on Table 9, most respondents demonstrated a high level of understanding in both *Religious Moderation* and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* values. Specifically, 789 respondents (61.3%) showed a high level of knowledge of Religious Moderation, while 816 respondents (63.4%) demonstrated a high level of knowledge of *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* values. Meanwhile, 412 respondents (32.0%) and 398 respondents (30.9%) were categorized as having a moderate level of understanding for each variable, respectively. Only a small proportion of respondents, 86 (6.7%) for Religious Moderation and 73 (5.7%) for *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin*, fell into the low category. These results indicate that most

respondents possess a strong understanding of both Religious Moderation and *Rahmatan lil-'Alamin* principles.

## Discussion

The demographic findings in Table 1 show that most respondents were female (62.2%) and within the productive age range (30–44 years: 52.1%; 45–62 years: 33.3%). This indicates that most PAI teacher candidates in the PPG program possess relatively mature professional teaching backgrounds. Previous studies have affirmed that professional experience and age maturity can strengthen teachers' pedagogical and reflective capacities in applying the values of religious moderation (Mukhibat et al., 2024). Therefore, these results provide a strong foundation indicating that participants possess adequate human capital to internalize religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values.

The finding that 87.7% of participants hold a bachelor's degree (S1) and 12.3% hold a master's degree (S2) demonstrates that formal educational attainment is predominantly at the undergraduate level. The ANOVA results (Table 6) indicate that educational background (S1 vs. S2) has a significant effect, though small ( $\eta^2 = .003$ ). This aligns with the argument that postgraduate education enhances teachers' reflective, inclusive, and epistemic dimensions in the moderation curriculum (Lunn Brownlee et al., 2022). Hence, although most participants are Bachelor's graduates, the presence of S2 graduates offers a modest advantage in understanding religious moderation.

Table 2 shows that the mean scores of religious moderations and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* understanding are high, with relatively small standard deviations, indicating a homogeneous distribution. This suggests that PPG participants belong to a group with a relatively uniform and well-established understanding of moderation and humanistic values. Recent studies have shown that the curricular integration of religious moderation in higher education has improved students' knowledge of tolerance and civility (Mukhibat et al., 2024; Selvia et al., 2022). Therefore, this result reinforces that the PPG program effectively facilitates the internalization of these values.

The instrument validity and reliability results (Table 3) indicate Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of .901 and .912, well above the minimum threshold of .70. This provides confidence that the measures for religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* are consistent and valid. This is essential, as robust measurement allows for more reliable interpretation of correlation and regression results (Arif, 2021). In moderation studies, valid instruments are necessary to accurately measure dimensions such as nationalism, tolerance, anti-violence, and local cultural accommodation (Khasanah et al., 2023; Qomusuddin et al., 2025).

The correlation analysis (Table 4) reveals a strong positive relationship between understanding of religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* ( $r = .684$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This confirms the hypothesis that the two constructs are substantively interrelated. Theoretically, this finding aligns with the model of religious moderation, which asserts that national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and cultural accommodation are foundations for universal humanism (Nasir & Rijal, 2021). Thus, the stronger the understanding of religious moderation, the stronger the internalization of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values.

The gender difference analysis (Table 5) shows that female participants scored higher than males on both constructs: religious moderation ( $M = 79.01$  vs.  $77.58$ ) and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* ( $M = 82.14$  vs.  $80.74$ ). Although the effect sizes are small (Cohen's  $d \approx 0.16$ – $0.18$ ), the finding suggests a gender-based tendency in value internalization. Previous studies in the Indonesian context found that women tend to have stronger orientations toward civility and inclusivity in religious education (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021). This implies that PPG training might benefit from incorporating gender-sensitive strategies to strengthen male participation in internalizing moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values.

The finding that 52.4% of participants had 10–15 years of teaching experience suggests that most respondents possess substantial professional experience. From the perspective of teacher



development theory, years of experience enhance reflective capacity, contextual understanding, and the practical application of values. Concerning religious moderation, teaching experience can help teacher candidates bridge the gap between theory and the practical application of tolerance, local cultural accommodation, and humanity in the classroom. Hence, training institutions should leverage this experience as an asset to strengthen moderation programs.

The linear regression results (Table 7) show that understanding of religious moderation significantly predicts understanding of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* ( $\beta = .684$ ,  $R^2 = .468$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This means that religious moderation understanding can explain 46.8% of the variance in *rahmatan lil-'alamin* understanding. This strengthens the idea that religious moderation is not only a value orientation but also an active predictor of the internalization of universal humanistic values in Islamic education. In curriculum development studies, Mukhibat et al. found that strengthening moderation through specific courses resulted in high character development indicators (average score = 81.9) (Mukhibat et al., 2024). The findings support the importance of integrating moderation as a foundation for teaching *rahmatan lil-'alamin*.

The normality and homogeneity tests (Table 8) show that the data meet parametric statistical assumptions (Shapiro–Wilk  $p = .064$  &  $.072$ ; Levene  $p = .178$ ). This strengthens the inferential validity of the correlation, t-test, ANOVA, and regression analyses performed. In educational methodology, fulfilling these assumptions is a prerequisite for a valid and reliable interpretation of findings. Therefore, the inferential results obtained are statistically valid and can be confidently used to draw theoretical and practical implications.

Overall, the findings indicate that PAI teacher candidates in the PPG program demonstrate high and interrelated levels of understanding of religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values. This supports the position that professional teacher education has significant potential to instill moderation and humanistic values within Islamic educational ecosystems. However, minor differences by gender and educational background suggest that training programs should be designed responsively to accommodate gender, academic, and professional experience factors.

Practical recommendations include strengthening religious moderation modules within the PPG structure, developing gender-sensitive training components, and incorporating reflective teaching experiences into value-based learning. For future research, it is recommended that longitudinal studies be conducted to observe changes in the understanding of moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values over time and to explore mediating variables such as teacher self-efficacy and spiritual leadership.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that PAI teacher candidates participating in the PPG program demonstrate a high and consistent level of understanding of both religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values. The demographic characteristics show that most participants are female, within the productive age range, and possess substantial teaching experience, reflecting a cohort with mature professional competence and strong pedagogical potential. Educational background and Gender appear to contribute to differences in understanding, with female participants and those holding higher academic qualifications showing slightly greater internalization of moderation and humanistic values. These results affirm that teacher professionalism and reflective capacity are essential in embedding moderation values in Islamic education. The strong positive relationship between religious moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* understanding further indicates that mastery of moderation principles enhances teachers' ability to apply universal Islamic values of compassion, justice, and inclusivity in their educational practice.

Despite these significant findings, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The data are based on self-reported questionnaires, which may be influenced by social desirability bias, particularly given that moderation and humanistic values are strongly promoted within the PPG program. As a result, participants' responses may reflect normative expectations rather than fully capturing their actual attitudes or classroom practices.

Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the instruments used, along with the fulfillment of normality and homogeneity assumptions, confirm the robustness of the findings. The results underscore the PPG program's strategic role as a transformative platform for nurturing educators who embody moderate, tolerant, and humanistic perspectives. Strengthening the integration of religious moderation within the curriculum, applying gender-sensitive pedagogical strategies, and encouraging reflective teaching experiences are crucial steps to deepen value-based learning among future Islamic educators. Future research is recommended to explore the longitudinal development of these values and to examine mediating factors, such as self-efficacy, professional identity, and spiritual leadership, that may further enhance the internalization of moderation and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* principles in teacher education.

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