

Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development and Strengthening Moderate Islam as the Future Direction for Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Indonesia

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Abstrak: Perubahan Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam (PTKI) di Indonesia dari Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN) dan Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) menuju Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) membuka era baru bagi pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan berbasis nilai-nilai keislaman. Namun, transformasi kelembagaan tersebut belum sepenuhnya mampu menjawab tantangan globalisasi, digitalisasi, serta meningkatnya polarisasi sosial dan keagamaan. PTKI dituntut tidak hanya menghasilkan lulusan yang unggul secara akademik, tetapi juga memiliki karakter keagamaan yang inklusif, kritis, dan moderat. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis arah masa depan PTKI melalui dua pilar strategis, yaitu pengembangan kurikulum interdisipliner dan penguatan Islam moderat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kepustakaan dengan menelaah berbagai sumber ilmiah yang relevan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi ilmu agama dan ilmu umum bukan semata untuk mereduksi dikotomi keilmuan, melainkan untuk membangun cara pandang ilmiah dan keagamaan yang saling melengkapi. Paradigma kurikulum interdisipliner memungkinkan mahasiswa mengkaji persoalan keagamaan dan sosial melalui berbagai perspektif keilmuan, sehingga mendorong dialog akademik, toleransi intelektual, dan penguatan berpikir kritis. Temuan lain mengungkap bahwa internalisasi nilai wasathiyah (moderasi beragama) akan lebih efektif apabila tidak hanya diajarkan melalui mata kuliah, tetapi juga ditanamkan melalui ekosistem kampus, budaya akademik, dan praktik ilmiah. Kajian ini merekomendasikan agar PTKI memperkuat relevansi kurikulum, inovasi pembelajaran, dan budaya akademik moderat sebagai strategi pengembangan pendidikan Islam yang unggul, inklusif, dan berdaya saing global.

Kata kunci: PTKI, kurikulum interdisipliner, integrasi ilmu, Islam moderat, UIN

Abstract: The change of Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI) in Indonesia from State Islamic Religious Colleges (STAIN) and State Islamic Religious Institutes (IAIN) to State Islamic Universities (UIN) opens a new era for the development of science based on Islamic values. However, this institutional transformation has not been fully able to answer the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and increasing social and religious polarization. PTKI is required



not only to produce graduates who excel academically, but also to have an inclusive, critical, and moderate religious character. This article aims to analyze the future direction of PTKI through two strategic pillars, namely the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum and the strengthening of moderate Islam. This research uses a literature study approach by examining various relevant scientific sources. The results of the study show that the integration of religious science and general science is not only to reduce the scientific dichotomy, but to build a complementary scientific and religious perspective. The interdisciplinary curriculum paradigm allows students to examine religious and social issues through various scientific perspectives, thereby encouraging academic dialogue, intellectual tolerance, and strengthening critical thinking. Other findings reveal that the internalization of *wasathiyah* values (religious moderation) will be more effective if it is not only taught through courses, but also instilled through campus ecosystems, academic culture, and scientific practices. This study recommends that PTKI strengthen the relevance of curriculum, learning innovation, and moderate academic culture as a strategy for developing Islamic education that is superior, inclusive, and globally competitive.

Keywords: PTKI, interdisciplinary curriculum, integration of knowledge, moderate Islam, UIN

Introduction

Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI) in Indonesia occupy a strategic position in the national education system, not only as institutions for the development of Islamic knowledge, but also as institutions that strive to address the challenges of social and global change. The change in institutional status from STAIN and IAIN to State Islamic Universities (UIN) is one manifestation of efforts to strengthen the role of PTKI in responding to demands for a more inclusive education that is relevant to the needs of the wider community (Hanif et al., 2024; Susiyati & Sihono, 2024). Increasing the integration between religious and general knowledge is also part of this adaptation, aiming for PTKI graduates to be not only competent in Islamic studies, but also have capabilities in broader social and professional contexts (Achmad, 2025).

This institutional transformation marks a serious effort to broaden the scope of Islamic higher education through the integration of Islamic and general sciences within a single academic system. This integration is expected to eliminate the dichotomy that has limited the development of knowledge within Islamic higher education institutions (PTKI), while simultaneously opening up space for the emergence of a more holistic and contextual scientific approach (Abdullah, 2020b). With their status as universities, PTKI have a significant opportunity to develop cross-

disciplinary disciplines relevant to the needs of society and the workplace. The concept of scientific integration in the context of Islamic higher education demands a paradigm shift from a dichotomous model to an integrative-interconnective approach, namely a scientific perspective that places religion and science in a dialogical and complementary relationship (Abdullah, 2012, 2020a).

However, several studies indicate that institutional transformation has not been fully accompanied by profound changes in academic paradigms and curricula. This condition aligns with Azra's (2012) view, which asserts that modernization of Islamic higher education cannot be achieved solely through institutional changes but must address aspects of epistemology, curriculum, and learning methods to ensure graduates are academically and socially competitive. In practice, curriculum development in some Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) still faces various limitations, both in terms of design, implementation, and integration across disciplines. Amidst the currents of globalization and digitalization of education, Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) are also faced with the demand to produce graduates who not only master normative Islamic knowledge but also possess critical, adaptive, and solution-oriented thinking skills to address complex social issues (Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2020).

On the other hand, contemporary socio-religious dynamics demonstrate the increasing polarization of religious understanding in the public sphere. This phenomenon underscores the importance of strengthening moderate Islamic values (moderate) in the world of education, including in higher education. Religious moderation is understood as a religious attitude that emphasizes balance, tolerance, and openness to differences, without ignoring the basic principles of Islamic teachings. From an Islamic educational perspective, these values moderatenot only understood as an individual normative attitude, but as an ethical and pedagogical framework that must be internalized through the education system, including the curriculum and academic culture in Islamic higher education (Baidhawry, 2015). Islamic education is essentially oriented towards forming religious individuals who are not only normatively obedient but also able to coexist harmoniously in a pluralistic society. Therefore, the values of religious moderation need to be integrated into the Islamic education system, including in higher education, as a response to social change and global challenges (Nata, 2016). And PTKI (Islamic Higher Education Institutions) has a strategic role as a center for the production and reproduction of

moderate Islamic discourse through the process of education, research, and the formation of campus academic culture (Baidhawry, 2020).

Although numerous studies have been conducted on the transformation of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), scientific integration, and religious moderation, most research still addresses these three aspects separately. Studies that specifically position curriculum development as a strategic instrument for integrating scientific knowledge while internalizing moderate Islamic values are still relatively limited. Yet, the curriculum is the heart of the educational process, playing a crucial role in shaping students' thinking, attitudes, and character. In practice, the curriculum at several PTKIs still tends to be fragmented by discipline, while strengthening religious moderation is often limited to specific courses and has not been systematically integrated into the overall academic ecosystem (Huda & al., 2022). In the context of Islamic education, the curriculum is understood not merely as an administrative tool but as a strategic instrument that determines the direction of the development of scientific knowledge, values, and graduate competencies. Therefore, curriculum development at PTKIs must be consciously designed to address constantly changing social and scientific challenges (Muhaimin, 2015).

Based on these conditions, this article argues that the sustainability and relevance of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in the future are largely determined by the institution's ability to integrate two strategic pillars: interdisciplinary curriculum development and the strengthening of moderate Islam. An interdisciplinary curriculum enables students to understand religious and social issues through various scientific perspectives in an integrated manner, thereby fostering critical, dialogical, and inclusive thinking. Meanwhile, moderate Islamic values serve as an ethical and epistemological foundation that guides the academic process toward balance, tolerance, and social harmony (Baidhawry, 2020).

To comprehensively examine these issues, this article employs a qualitative approach through literature review, reviewing various relevant scientific publications, such as journal articles and academic works discussing scientific integration, curriculum development, and religious moderation in Islamic higher education. The data were analyzed descriptively and analytically through content analysis, identifying key themes related to the transformation of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), interdisciplinary curricula, and the internalization of moderate Islamic values. Through a critical synthesis of these findings and ideas, this article is expected to

provide conceptual contributions and practical recommendations for the future development of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Indonesia.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of library research that is conceptual-analytical in nature. The qualitative approach is used because this research aims to understand and construct ideas regarding the integration of interdisciplinary curricula and Islamic moderation in the context of Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKI). Library research emphasises critical analysis of current scientific literature sources as the basis for developing arguments (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019).

The data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data includes reputable scientific journal articles and the latest academic books that directly discuss the integration of sciences, interdisciplinary curricula, and Islamic moderation. Secondary data includes policy documents, research reports, and other relevant publications that support this study (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2021).

Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation studies with a systematic literature search. This process includes the identification, selection, and evaluation of sources based on criteria of relevance, credibility, and publication novelty, thereby ensuring the validity of the data used in the research (Snyder, 2019).

Data analysis using content analysis techniques with a descriptive-critical approach. This analysis is conducted through several stages, namely: (1) data reduction by selecting literature that aligns with the study's focus, (2) coding and categorisation of main themes, (3) interpretation of relationships between concepts, and (4) conceptual synthesis to produce a comprehensive framework (Elo et al., 2014; although classic, it is still used and combined with contemporary approaches such as Vaismoradi et al., 2020).

With this approach, the research is expected to produce a stronger theoretical contribution in the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum model based on Islamic moderation in the environment of PTKI.

Results and Discussion

PTKI Transformation and Contemporary Academic Challenges

The transformation of Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) from State Islamic Colleges (STAIN) and State Islamic Institutes (IAIN) into State Islamic Universities (UIN) represents a significant milestone in the history of Islamic

higher education in Indonesia. This change reflects a strategic effort to broaden the scope of knowledge through the integration of Islamic and general sciences within a unified academic framework. This integration is envisioned as a solution to the dichotomy of knowledge that has long been a fundamental challenge in the development of Islamic education (Abdullah, 2020b).

However, various studies indicate that this institutional transformation has not been fully accompanied by a profound transformation of academic paradigms and curriculum practices. In many cases, scientific integration remains at the structural and administrative levels, while epistemological and pedagogical integration has not been optimally realized (Abdullah, 2020b). As a result, PTKI curricula have not been fully responsive to the dynamics of globalization, the digitalization of education, and the increasing complexity of competencies required of graduates.

On the other hand, PTKI (Institute of Islamic Education) is faced with the challenge of producing graduates who excel not only in normative scientific knowledge but also possess critical, adaptive, and contextual thinking skills. This challenge is exacerbated by changes in the social landscape and technological developments that influence the religious practices and thinking of the younger generation of Muslims (Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2020). Therefore, the transformation of PTKI should not stop at institutional change, but rather be directed at strengthening the curriculum as the center of academic change.

In this context, the transformation of PTKI (Institute of Higher Education) needs to be understood as a fundamental process of epistemological and pedagogical reconstruction. The change in status to a university should be accompanied by a renewed perspective on science, learning methods, and the relationship between religion and social reality. Without this paradigm shift, institutional transformation has the potential to become merely an administrative symbol that neglects academic substance. Therefore, the primary challenge for PTKI going forward lies in their ability to make the curriculum a primary instrument of change, not merely an addition to the institutional structure.

Although models of scientific integration, such as the spider web paradigm, have been introduced since the early 2000s, the gap between epistemological discourse and practical implementation persists (Abdullah, 2006; 2020). This situation indicates that the problem of scientific integration is not solely conceptual or technical, but is influenced by the complexity of structural and cultural factors rooted in academic practices within Islamic higher education (Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2020; Zarkasyi, 2021).

In this context, there are three main obstacles that simultaneously form the root of the problem and reproduce the failure of scientific integration.

First, the strengthening of institutionalized sectoral egos within the academic practices of lecturers and study programs. Established academics in specific disciplines, both within Islamic and general sciences, tend to view interdisciplinary integration as a threat to their epistemic authority and identity (Abdullah, 2020). The resistance that emerges is not only administrative but also rooted in rigid epistemological beliefs regarding the boundaries of "valid knowledge" and "correct scientific methods" (Zarkasyi, 2021). As a result, scientific integration is often reduced to a symbolic agenda without substantive methodological transformation, resulting in ceremonial interdisciplinary collaboration without producing a real scientific synthesis.

Second, the structural imbalance in the academic incentive system does not favor the development of integrative science. Functional promotion mechanisms, journal accreditation, and research grant distribution are still oriented toward monodisciplinary specialization (Altbach, 2016; Marginson, 2018). Consequently, cross-disciplinary collaborative research, integrative curriculum development, and interdisciplinary publications do not receive proportional recognition and often face administrative obstacles due to the rigidity of scientific field classifications. In this situation, lecturers rationally tend to maintain narrow specializations to meet administrative demands, thus depriving scientific integration of the structural incentives necessary for its development.

Third, epistemological stagnation amidst massive institutional expansion. The institutional transformation from IAIN to UIN is often interpreted in a reductionist manner as a structural expansion through the addition of general faculties, without a systematic reconstruction of scientific paradigms, research methodologies, and academic culture. Lecturers from Islamic studies backgrounds tend to maintain traditional, textual-based approaches, while lecturers from general disciplines continue to operate within a secular framework without any integration of Islamic values. As a result, the scientific dichotomy is not completely eliminated, but rather shifts from inter-institutional to intra-institutional. Without in-depth epistemological intervention, this transformation risks producing institutions that are administratively modern but remain scientifically fragmented.

These three obstacles sectoral egos, distorted incentive systems, and epistemological stagnation are intertwined in a reproductive cycle that reinforces the

status quo. Sectoral egos hinder epistemic openness, incentive systems reinforce narrow specialization, while epistemological stagnation stops integration at the discursive level. Therefore, efforts to overcome these obstacles cannot be achieved solely through a technocratic approach; they require a simultaneous structural, cultural, and political transformation strategy as a prerequisite for achieving substantive and sustainable scientific integration.

Third, there are signs of epistemological stagnation amidst institutional expansion. The transformation from IAIN to UIN is often interpreted in a reductionist manner as merely the addition of general faculties and administrative changes, without being accompanied by fundamental changes in academic thinking and culture (Azra, 2012; Abdullah, 2020). As a result, scientific integration does not develop as a living scientific paradigm, but rather stalls as an institutional narrative.

If these three obstacles are not addressed systematically, the transformation of PTKI has the potential to remain stuck at the symbolic level and fail to produce substantive changes in academic practice. Therefore, strategic steps are needed that prioritize the reconstruction of the curriculum and scientific paradigm in the future PTKI transformation agenda.

Critical Analysis of the Implementation of Interdisciplinary Curriculum and Islamic Moderation in PTKI

Although the idea of integrating an interdisciplinary curriculum based on Islamic moderation has a strong conceptual foundation, its implementation in the environment of Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) still faces various structural and cultural obstacles.

First, from the aspect of an interdisciplinary curriculum, the main challenge lies in the still strong disciplinary boundaries in the academic environment. Studies show that higher education institutions tend to maintain monodisciplinary structures that hinder cross-field collaboration and knowledge integration (Ashby & Exter, 2019; Darbellay, 2020). As a result, curriculum integration often remains normative without concrete implementation in learning design. Moreover, the limited competencies of lecturers in interdisciplinary approaches also pose a significant barrier, particularly in the development of collaborative curricula and integrative methodologies (Holley, 2020; Lattuca et al., 2021).

Second, in the context of Islamic moderation, the challenges are not only conceptual but also practical. Religious moderation often stops at the policy level without being systematically internalised in the learning process (Azra, 2020; Ministry

of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Moreover, the socio-religious dynamics on campus show a tendency towards exclusivism and polarisation of religious understanding among students, which poses a serious challenge to the implementation of moderation values (Hefner, 2021; Huda et al., 2022).

Furthermore, another challenge is the unavailability of an operational model that can systematically and measurably integrate an interdisciplinary curriculum with the values of Islamic moderation. Recent studies emphasise that the success of curriculum integration requires a clear framework, learning outcome indicators, and competency-based evaluation (Leask, 2020; Jones & Davies, 2021). Without these, integration becomes merely a conceptual discourse that is difficult to implement sustainably.

However, several best practices are beginning to develop in a number of PTKIs. For example, the integration of courses such as "Islam and Multiculturalism" or "Islam and Global Issues," which combine Islamic perspectives with social sciences, has proven capable of enhancing students' understanding of moderation (Hefner, 2021). In addition, co-curricular programs such as interfaith dialogues, community service based on diversity, and religious moderation training have shown a positive impact in fostering tolerant and inclusive attitudes (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020; Huda et al., 2022).

On the other hand, there are still significant gaps, especially in the aspects of evaluation and program sustainability. Many moderation and curriculum integration programs are sporadic and not fully integrated into the education system. This is in line with research findings that state the lack of institutional support and sustainable policies are the main factors behind the failure to implement curriculum innovations (Leask, 2020; Barnett, 2021).

Based on the analysis, strategic steps are needed, including strengthening faculty capacity, explicitly integrating moderation values into the curriculum, developing an applicable interdisciplinary curriculum model, and implementing a comprehensive and sustainable evaluation system. Thus, the integration of interdisciplinary curricula and Islamic moderation can move from the normative level to tangible and impactful academic practices.

Interdisciplinary Curriculum as a Strategy for Scientific Integration

One strategic response to the challenges of transforming Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) is the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum. An interdisciplinary curriculum is a learning approach that integrates various disciplines to comprehensively understand issues. In the context of PTKI, this

knowledge but its weakness is seen in the absence of a systematic explanation of how this integration process is carried out in everyday curriculum, learning, and research practices (Ramadhan, 2025; Putri et al., 2025). As a result, scientific integration often stops at the metaphorical and symbolic level, without concrete translation in the classroom or in academic research design.

Epistemologically, this limitation can be overcome by strengthening the tri-epistemology framework developed by M. Amin Abdullah, which emphasizes the integration of three sources of knowledge: solution (authority of the revealed text), proof (rationality and scientific approach), as well as mystical (intuitive and spiritual dimensions) (Wardani & Abidin, 2025; Sya'adah et al., 2024). Within this framework, studies of contemporary issues are no longer merely textual, but rather analyzed comprehensively through historical-sociological contextual reading, theoretical social science approaches, and ethical-spiritual reflections that emphasize human values (Sarmin & Dewi, 2026; Afryansyah et al., 2025). The dialectical interaction between these three epistemologies serves as a structural mechanism to prevent reductionism and a single, dogmatic reading of religious texts.

However, without clear operational instruments, this epistemological framework remains potentially a normative discourse that is difficult to implement (Wahyu & M., 2025). Therefore, it is necessary to develop Operational Guidelines for Scientific Integration that can bridge the gap between conceptual vision and academic practice. These guidelines include integrative lesson plans (RPS), problem-based learning, multidisciplinary teaching materials, and evaluation based on contextual analysis (Saputra, Hermawan, & Priatna, 2024). Thus, scientific integration no longer remains a conceptual ornament but becomes a measurable and applicable pedagogical practice (Putri et al., 2025).

In response to these limitations, this study suggests the need to develop Operational Guidelines for Scientific Integration that include clear and measurable technical procedures. These guidelines should encompass at least four main components, summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Operational Guidelines for Scientific Integration for PTKI

Component	Operational Description	Success Indicators (Measurable)
1. Preparation of Integrated RPS	Each Semester Learning Plan (RPS) for Islamic studies courses must integrate sociological, historical, and philosophical approaches in the formulation of learning outcomes (CPL) and lecture materials, so that religious texts are not taught in a purely normative-doctrinal manner.	The inclusion of cross-disciplinary approach methods (at least 2 of 3 approaches) in each RPS, which is verified by the faculty curriculum development team at the beginning of each semester.
2. Learning Method Design	Adopting the model <i>Problem-Based Learning</i> (PBL) or <i>Case-Based Learning</i> (CBL) with contemporary socio-religious case scenarios such as online radicalism, gender equality, ecology, or sharia economics that require students to conduct analyses from various scientific perspectives simultaneously.	A minimum of 60% of the total lecture meetings in one semester use PBL/CBL scenarios and involve discussions facilitated by lecturers from at least two different expertise (e.g.: lecturers in interpretation and lecturers in sociology).
3. Development of Teaching Materials	Providing teaching modules and reading materials equipped with integrated case studies, bibliographies from various scientific perspectives (interpretation, history, anthropology, psychology, economics), and connecting classical texts (yellow books/turats) with social realities and contemporary issues in a contextual manner.	The availability of digital/interactive teaching materials per course that cite references from at least 3 different disciplines, and have received validation from cross-field experts before use.

<p>4. Learning Achievement Evaluation Instrument</p>	<p>Develop assessment instruments (exams, assignments, projects) designed to measure students' abilities in connectnormative religious texts with social reality, not simply testing memorization, literal translation, or narrow textual understanding. Instruments should encourage students to demonstrate critical analysis, synthesis, and reflection.</p>	<p>Analytical essay instruments, mini field research projects, or case-solving presentations are used as the main assessment components with a minimum weighting of 40% of the final course grade, and are assessed using a rubric that includes aspects of cross-disciplinary connections.</p>
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With these four components in place, the spiderweb model is no longer merely a conceptual ornament on campus walls but is truly realized in real, sustainable academic practice. Each component reinforces each other: an integrative lesson plan (RPS) serves as the foundation, the PBL method serves as the vehicle, teaching materials serve as the content, and evaluation serves as a measuring tool for success in creating a complete academic cycle consistent with the spirit of scientific integration.

To bridge the gap between vision and practice, this study proposes a 5-Dimensional Implementation Framework as an operational tool for PTKI. The five dimensions include: (1) Curricular Dimension, with an indicator of at least 20% of study program credits being compulsory interdisciplinary courses such as "Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies" or "Social Jurisprudence"; (2) Pedagogical Dimension, which requires the use of problem-based learning methods and multi-perspective discussions in each Semester Learning Plan (RPS); (3) Epistemological Dimension, which requires every Islamic study to use at least two of the three epistemological approaches (bayani, burhani, irfani); (4) Cultural Dimension, through the establishment of a "House of Religious Moderation" and cross-faculty student exchange programs; and (5) Digital Dimension, which equips students with digital religious literacy to counter radical narratives in cyberspace. This framework ensures that religious moderation is no longer just a policy slogan, but is born organically from a structured and measurable academic design.

Table 2. Implementation Framework for 5 Dimensions of Interdisciplinary Curriculum and Strengthening Moderate Islam

Dimensions	Component	Measurable Indicators
Curricular	Interdisciplinary courses	A minimum of 20% of the study program's credits are integrative courses (e.g., Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies, Social Jurisprudence, History of Contextual Islamic Thought)
Pedagogical	Discourse-dialogic method	Each Semester Learning Plan (RPS) must include a multi-perspective approach and method, <i>problem-based learning</i> (PBL) in learning
Cultural	Moderate campus ecosystem	The existence of the "House of Religious Moderation" as a center for interfaith dialogue activities and regular student exchange programs between faculties
Epistemological	Tri-epistemology (<i>explanation, explanation, knowledge</i>)	Every Islamic study in lectures uses at least 2 of 3 knowledge approaches (revelation text, reason/science, and spiritual intuition)
Digital	Religious digital literacy	The curriculum includes competencies in identification, critical analysis, and countering radical narratives and religious hoaxes on social media platforms.

With the introduction of this five-dimensional framework, the integration between the spiderweb conceptual model and operational guidelines becomes evident. The interdisciplinary curriculum is no longer understood as an abstract discourse, but rather as a structured and measurable policy instrument. This also emphasizes that strengthening moderate Islam in PTKI (Islamic higher education institutions) cannot simply be positioned as an institutional slogan but must emerge from systematic academic engineering through curriculum design, learning methods,

campus ecosystems, epistemological foundations, and simultaneous readiness for the digital era.

Epistemologically, the interdisciplinary approach in the PTKI curriculum demands a shift in thinking from a linear scientific model to a dialogical and reflective one. Islamic sciences are no longer positioned as standalone entities, but rather interact critically with the social sciences, humanities, and sciences in interpreting reality. This approach aligns with the demands of 21st-century higher education, which emphasizes critical thinking skills, complex problem-solving, and interdisciplinary literacy (Muna & Fauzi, 2024). Thus, the interdisciplinary curriculum serves not only as an academic design but also as an epistemological framework in shaping the thinking of PTKI students.

Furthermore, interdisciplinary curriculum development practices have begun to emerge at a number of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Indonesia through their respective institutional policies and academic designs. Several State Islamic Universities (UIN) have developed integrative curricula by linking Islamic studies and general sciences based on the university's academic vision. This pattern aligns with research findings showing that scientific integration at PTKI generally develops through institutional and curricular approaches, albeit with varying degrees of implementation (Sholihah et al., 2024; Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2020).

From a pedagogical perspective, an interdisciplinary curriculum encourages a shift in learning approaches from a knowledge-transmission model to one based on dialogue and reflection. Students act not merely as recipients of information but as active subjects constructing knowledge through interdisciplinary interactions. This approach opens up space for project-based learning, case studies, and collaborative research relevant to contemporary religious and social issues. Thus, an interdisciplinary curriculum contributes to the development of both academic competence and social skills in PTKI students (Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2020).

Numerous studies have shown that an interdisciplinary curriculum can encourage students to understand religious texts and realities more contextually. Students are not only trained to read religious texts normatively but are also encouraged to analyze them from social, historical, and humanities perspectives (Sholihah et al., 2024). This approach contributes to strengthening critical and reflective thinking skills, which are essential for addressing contemporary religious issues.

Furthermore, the implementation of an interdisciplinary curriculum in PTKI also opens up opportunities for academic collaboration across study programs and faculties. This collaboration has the potential to enrich the learning process and foster an inclusive and dialogical academic culture (Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2020). Thus, the interdisciplinary curriculum serves not only as an academic tool but also as a strategy for developing a more dynamic PTKI scientific ecosystem.

Strengthening Moderate Islam in the PTKI Academic Ecosystem

Strengthening moderate Islam (moderate) is a strategic agenda in the development of Islamic higher education, particularly amidst increasing polarization of religious understanding in the public sphere. Religious moderation emphasizes balance, tolerance, and openness to differences, while rejecting extreme and exclusive attitudes in religion (Idris et al., 2024).

In the context of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), internalizing moderate Islamic values cannot be achieved solely through specific courses or normative approaches. Numerous studies confirm that religious moderation will be more effective if instilled systemically through academic culture, learning practices, and social interactions within the campus environment (Baidhawiy, 2020). Therefore, PTKI has a responsibility not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to shape inclusive attitudes and religious ethos.

Strengthening moderate Islam within PTKI (Islamic Higher Education Institutions) is also closely related to how religious knowledge is produced and taught. When Islamic studies are delivered in a monodisciplinary and normative manner, there is a risk of developing a rigid understanding of religion that lacks sensitivity to social context. Conversely, an interdisciplinary approach allows Islamic values to be understood historically, sociologically, and humanistically, making them more adaptive to the diversity of societal realities. In this context, religious moderation is positioned not as a normative slogan, but as the result of a critical and reflective academic process (Baidhawiy, 2020).

As an academic space, Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) hold a strategic position in producing and reproducing moderate Islamic discourse. The curriculum in Islamic higher education serves not only as an academic tool but also as an arena for shaping students' ways of thinking and religious orientation. Therefore, the integration of the curriculum and moderate values is a crucial prerequisite for the sustainability of PTKI (Azra, 2012; Baidhawiy, 2015). Through educational activities, research, and scientific discourse, PTKI can act as agents of strengthening religious

moderation, contributing to the creation of social harmony in a pluralistic society (Azra, 2020). Therefore, religious moderation needs to be understood as an integral part of PTKI's academic mission.

Synergy of Interdisciplinary Curriculum and Moderate Islam as the Future Direction of PTKI

An interdisciplinary curriculum and the strengthening of moderate Islam are two strategic pillars that are interrelated in determining the future direction of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI). The curriculum in Islamic higher education functions not only as an academic tool, but also as an arena for shaping students' ways of thinking and religious orientation. Therefore, the integration of the curriculum and moderate values is a crucial prerequisite for the sustainability of PTKI (Azra, 2012; Baidhaw, 2015). The interdisciplinary curriculum provides an academic framework that enables interdisciplinary dialogue, while moderate Islamic values serve as an ethical and epistemological foundation in the academic process.

Several studies have shown that integrating the curriculum with inclusive Islamic values can shape students' character to be open, tolerant, and socially sensitive (Baidhaw, 2020; Huda & al., 2022). In this context, the curriculum is no longer understood solely as a course structure, but as a space for shaping students' religious thinking and attitudes.

By positioning an interdisciplinary curriculum as an instrument for internalizing moderate Islam, PTKI has a significant opportunity to produce academically superior graduates while also serving as agents of moderation in society. This synergy is key to the sustainability and relevance of PTKI in facing global challenges and contemporary socio-religious dynamics.

Unlike previous research that tends to separate discussions of scientific integration and religious moderation, this article positions the interdisciplinary curriculum as a strategic instrument that simultaneously bridges the two. The novelty of this study lies in its assertion that religious moderation in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) is not simply understood as normative content or institutional policy, but rather as the result of curriculum design and a dialogic academic process. Thus, the strengthening of moderate Islam does not exist external to the education system but is organically internalized through the interdisciplinary curriculum and academic culture of PTKI.

Conclusion

The transformation of Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Indonesia from STAIN and IAIN to State Islamic Universities (UIN) is a strategic step in responding to global dynamics, scientific developments, and contemporary socio-religious complexities. However, this study shows that institutional change alone is not enough to ensure the relevance and sustainability of PTKI in the future. This transformation needs to be accompanied by a renewal of the academic paradigm that addresses epistemological, pedagogical, and cultural aspects, with the curriculum as its primary instrument.

The discussion confirms that developing an interdisciplinary curriculum is a key strategy for integrating Islamic and general sciences in a dialogical and reflective manner. This approach not only aims to address the dichotomy of knowledge but also to shape students' critical, contextual thinking, and openness to diverse scientific perspectives. The implementation of an interdisciplinary curriculum in several Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) demonstrates that scientific integration can encourage learning that is more relevant to contemporary religious and social issues, while simultaneously strengthening a collaborative and inclusive academic culture.

On the other hand, strengthening moderate Islamic values (moderate) has proven ineffective when placed solely as normative content or limited to specific courses. This study confirms that religious moderation will be more meaningful when internalized systemically through curriculum design, the learning process, and the academic ecosystem of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI). In this context, an interdisciplinary approach plays a crucial role in helping students understand Islamic teachings from a historical, sociological, and humanistic perspective, enabling them to respond wisely and proportionately to the diversity of societal realities.

The novelty of this study lies in its assertion that an interdisciplinary curriculum and the strengthening of moderate Islam are not two separate agendas, but rather interrelated and mutually reinforcing. By positioning the curriculum as a space for scientific dialogue and the internalization of inclusive Islamic values, Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) have a significant opportunity to produce graduates who excel academically, adapt to changing times, and act as agents of moderation in a pluralistic society. Therefore, strengthening an interdisciplinary curriculum based on moderate Islamic values needs to be positioned as a strategic direction for the development of PTKI toward relevant, inclusive, and globally competitive Islamic education.

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