



EXPLORING RELIGIOUS MODERATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GENDER AND GENERATION IN YUSUF AZEEM IS NOT A HERO (2021)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines religious moderation in the novel Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero (2021) through the perspectives of gender and generation, analyzing how values such as understanding differences, controlling emotions, rejecting violence, and promoting social harmony are transmitted in Muslim families in a predominantly non-Muslim environment. Data were collected from selected quotations and narrative sections in the novel that describe the characters' responses to prejudice and discrimination with an understanding of religious moderation by Lukman Hakim and Boehnke's theory of intergenerational transmission of values. Using qualitative descriptive methods, the researcher identified religious moderation in Muslim families. The findings of this study are that Yusuf's father (Abba) applies religious moderation through emotional control, fighting evil with kindness and interfaith engagement, while Yusuf's mother (Amma) leads public advocacy in promoting true Islam, and the protagonist Yusuf represents the values of both his parents in his peaceful response to Islamophobia in his school and home environments, showing that religious moderation is a behavior that can be passed down and shapes Muslim identity and resilience.

Keywords: *Yusuf Azeem is not a hero, religious moderation, intergenerational transmission of values, literature*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji moderasi agama dalam novel Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero (2021) melalui perspektif gender dan generasi, dengan menganalisis bagaimana nilai-nilai seperti memahami perbedaan, mengendalikan emosi, menolak kekerasan, dan mempromosikan harmoni sosial ditransmisikan dalam keluarga Muslim di lingkungan yang mayoritas non-Muslim. Data dikumpulkan dari kutipan terpilih dan bagian naratif dalam novel yang menggambarkan respons tokoh terhadap prasangka dan diskriminasi dengan pemahaman religious moderation oleh Lukman Hakim dan Theory intergenerational transmission of values oleh Boehnke. Menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, peneliti mengidentifikasi religious moderation dalam keluarga muslim. Penemuan dalam penelitian ini adalah Ayah Yusuf (Abba) menerapkan religious moderation dengan pengendalian emosi, melawan keburukan dengan kebaikan dan keterlibatan antaragama, sementara Ibu Yusuf (Amma) memimpin advokasi publik dalam mengemukakan islam sebenarnya, dan protagonis Yusuf mewakili nilai-nilai dari kedua orangtuanya dalam respons damainya terhadap Islamofobia di lingkungan sekolah dan lingkungan rumahnya, menunjukkan bahwa moderasi agama merupakan perilaku yang dapat di turunkan dan membentuk identitas dan ketahanan Muslim.

Kata kunci: *Yusuf Azeem is not a hero, moderasi beragama, intergenerational transmission of values, sastra*

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INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation is a critical approach to creating harmony among diverse beliefs and social cohesion in a pluralistic society. In contemporary society, religious moderation is conceptualised as a middle ground between extremism and liberalism (Ainiyah, 2024). The rigid literalism often associated with the extreme right, which applies religious teachings inflexibly without regard to context, and the liberal relativism associated with the extreme left, which interprets religious teachings too freely or too loosely, sometimes neglecting core principles. Religious moderation avoids both extremes. By encouraging a non-violent attitude to religious life, this idea helps to strengthen the internalization of moral, spiritual, and religious values (Armita & Karuok, 2022)

Religious moderation, or *wasathiyyah*, is about being in the middle neither extreme in applying religion nor abandoning its core values (Irawan & Arif, 2022). The Qur'an describes this in Surah Al-Baqarah [2:143] as being a just and balanced community (*ummatan wasathan*), which means showing justice, tolerance, and good character. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin (2022) explains that religious moderation has four main parts: (1) understanding differences, (2) controlling emotions, (3) rejecting violence, and (4) taking part in building peace in society. Thus, religious balance will preserve civilisation and enable religious communities to coexist peacefully, respecting differences and embracing diversity.

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (Unaoc, 2023) emphasizes that moderation is not merely a theological stance but a practical approach to navigating differences, countering extremism, and fostering social harmony. Based on Pew Research Centre survey (2017) shows that many Americans associate Islam with violence; for example, 63% of Republican respondents believe Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence, and 64% are very concerned about extremism in the name of Islam in the United States (Lipka, 2017).

Islamophobia, prejudice, and hatred towards Islam, toward Muslims. The prejudice that Islam is monolithic and static, inferior, hostile, and manipulative creates the perception that Islam is a dangerous religion (Green, 2015). These perceptions give rise to attitudes that racial discrimination against Muslims is justified, that Muslim criticism of the West is invalid, and that anti-Muslim discourse is normal. Based on a 2009 Gallup survey, more than 43 percent of Americans have negative feelings about Islam, indicating that the majority of Americans do not have sufficient knowledge about Islam (Alshrari, 2020).

In literature, depictions of religious moderation often manifest through the experiences of characters negotiating their identities in complex socio-cultural landscapes (Azis & Samad, 2024). As seen in the novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero*, which highlights the harmonious attitude of the main character in facing discrimination and prejudice.

Saadia Faruqi's novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* (2021) presents a timely and relevant portrayal of religious moderation against this socio-historical backdrop. The story follows Yusuf, a 12-year-old Muslim boy in the fictional town of Frey, Texas, as he and his family confront

Islamophobia on the 20th anniversary of 9/11. Through its characters, the novel depicts multiple expressions of moderation from patient diplomacy to public advocacy—showing how individuals of different genders and generations respond to prejudice.

Generational approaches emphasize the intergenerational transfer of religious values and behaviours, illustrating that moderation is not simply an individual or abstract ideal but a cultural heritage handed down through family and community role models. Its consistently demonstrates that the values held by next-generation (NextGen) family members closely align with those of their parents and preceding generations, with parents playing a pivotal role in shaping their cultural outlooks (Kupangwa et al., 2025). This transfer includes both direct teaching and lived example, making religious moderation a collective and ongoing social practice. It also demonstrates the dynamic nature of moderation, shaped by both continuity and adaptation across generations.

Together, gender and generational approaches provide a framework for analysing how religious moderation is embedded in social relationships and cultural norms, presenting it as a practice rooted in identity, morality, and community responsibility rather than solely in personal belief or choice. This perspective is critical in literature, where characters and narratives often embody these social and cultural dimensions of religion, helping readers understand the complexity and lived reality of religious moderation. Male figures such as Abba and Uncle Rahman teach Yusuf the importance of emotional control, logic, and personal actions in building bridges. Female figures, such as Amma, demonstrate public action, community leadership, and speaking out for justice. Together, they pass on ways of practising Islam that are peaceful and active. This intergenerational transfer of values shows that moderation is not just a personal choice, but a cultural heritage that can be taught to younger generations.

This study examines Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero to understand how religious moderation is shaped by gender and generation in a Muslim family living in the context of Islamophobia. This study uses Lukman's (2022) frameworks to show how the novel portrays moderation as a response to prejudice and discrimination. This study argues that Faruqi's work provides a clear example of how Muslim youth can be taught to confront hatred without responding with hatred, transforming religious moderation into both a family value and a community strategy for peace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Religious Moderation

Religious moderation “*wasathiyyah*” refers to a balanced, fair approach to practicing religion, avoiding both excessive conservatism and overly liberal interpretations that neglect fundamental principles (Irawan & Arif, 2022). The term “moderation” comes from the Latin *moderatio*, meaning “within limits” or “not extreme” (Sulaiman & Yusuf, 2023). In Islam, this concept is rooted in the Qur’anic command for Muslims to be an *ummatan wasathan*—a just and balanced community—stated in Surah Al-Baqarah [2:143]. This verse calls Muslims to embody justice, tolerance, and moral integrity so they can serve as positive examples to the world.

Religious moderation serves as a middle ground between two extremes: an excessive understanding of religion that ignores social context, and a permissive liberalism that disregards religious teachings. Quraish Shihab explains that moderation in Islam is not about weakening faith, but about applying it in a way that respects human dignity and diversity. Similarly, Khaled Abou El Fadl portrays *wasathiyah* as a position that is 'neither extreme right nor left,' which demands strong adherence to Islamic values as well as openness to dialogue (Nirwana & Darmadali, 2021).

According to Lukman Hakim Saifuddin (2022), religious moderation is not about weakening beliefs, but rather about applying religious teachings in a way that harmonises devotion to God with respect for diversity in society. He identifies four main characteristics of moderation. First, a broad understanding of diversity, which means acknowledging and respecting religious and cultural differences while maintaining strong beliefs. Second, emotional control, which means responding to disagreements or provocations with patience and dignity, avoiding unnecessary hostility. Third, rejection of violence, meaning conflicts must be resolved through dialogue and peaceful means rather than physical or verbal aggression. Fourth, active social engagement, which means a willingness to contribute positively to the community regardless of religious or cultural differences. This framework positions moderation as a personal and social value, making it a powerful tool for building peaceful harmony in a multicultural society and promoting understanding and coexistence among different religious beliefs through media and literature, such as articles, the film industry, and literary works (Azis & Samad, 2024).

Literature offers a distinct medium through which students can explore the lived realities of others, especially marginalized or misrepresented communities (Dahlan, 2025). Religious moderation in literary works can indeed serve as a powerful tool to counter Islamophobia by embodying principles of coexistence, tolerance, and non-violence, as outlined in Nimer's book entitled "*Framework for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam*" (Nimer, 2000). It is showcasing national commitment as the foundation for coexistence, as well as depicting religious harmony in the context of nationhood and statehood. Additionally, active tolerance should be demonstrated through dialogue and cooperation among religious communities, as well as by featuring characters who respect each other's beliefs

2. Intergenerational Transmission of Values by Boehnke

Intergenerational transmission of values refers to the process whereby cultural and social values are passed down from one generation to the next within a family and society (Boehnke, 2001). Boehnke suggests that similarities in values between generations within a family are not solely due to the influence of parents on their children, but are also influenced by social conditions. He states in a study on German students and their parents that there was more parent-child similarity for those values that were rated as less important by the cohort of the parents (Albert et al., 2024). Thus, the values embraced by the younger generation are the result of the interaction between family influence and broader social value influence.

Boehnke asserts that values that are not common societal norms are more effectively transmitted within families. This suggests that the success of value transmission depends not only

on the importance of values to parents but also on how much those values differ from or are rejected by the broader society. Parents who hold values that differ from the mainstream of society tend to be more active and successful in instilling those values in their children compared to families whose values already align with social norms.

Additionally, Boehnke emphasises the importance of distinguishing between value transmission and value change. Values that are stable and common in society are not necessarily the same as the values that are most similar between parents and children. The social process involving other socialisation agents besides the family, such as peers and the social environment, also shapes the values of the younger generation, so value transmission is not a static process but a dynamic one influenced by a broader social context.

Boehnke's concept (2001) positions the family as the primary agent in value transmission, but it is not detached from the broader social context that influences the process. By understanding the interaction between family influence and societal values, this theory helps to examine the roles of women and men in shaping moderate attitudes for the younger generation within the family context.

In analyzing the novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero*, Boehnke's theory can be used to understand how family shapes moderate attitudes among the younger generation through gendered roles, specifically by examining how the women and men in Yusuf Azeem's family influence his worldview and identity. Then, explore how familial value transmission occurs amid broader societal pressures, especially cultural moderation versus external tensions such as Islamophobia. This approach highlights the interaction between the intimate family sphere and broader societal forces in molding the protagonist's moderate stance and responses to social challenges. Hence, Boehnke's framework helps reveal the dynamic interplay between family influence and societal context in shaping youth attitudes toward religious and cultural moderation in the novel.

3. *Yusuf Azeem is Not a Hero (2021)*

The novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* provides an insightful look at how young Muslim characters deal with post-9/11 prejudice by Saadia Faruqi was nominated for the Vermont Golden Dome Book Award in 2023 (Teguh et al., 2024). The novel was first published by Quill Tree Novels on 7 October 2021. The novel shows the experiences of a young Muslim protagonist navigating Islamophobia and identity challenges in contemporary America. Rather than focusing on the chronological plot, this review analyses the novel through thematic exploration, character development, symbolism, and narrative techniques relevant to the study of religious moderation and minority identity. It is centrally engages themes of discrimination, resilience, and community solidarity under the pressures of Islamophobia. The tension caused by the local group opposing the mosque and the personal bullying Yusuf faces serves to illustrate broader social conflicts affecting Muslim minorities. The theme of steadfast faith as resistance surfaces repeatedly, suggesting a nuanced representation of religious moderation as an active, principled stance against hatred rather than passive endurance.

Yusuf's experience of discrimination at school and in his community coincides with the 20th anniversary of 9/11, which brings painful memories and increased hostility. Central to the novel is Yusuf's uncle's journal, which connects past and present by transmitting lessons from the earlier 9/11 aftermath. Through the journal, Yusuf learns about the importance of standing firm and maintaining faith despite adversity, illustrating the transmission of resilience and communal values across generations. Additionally, Yusuf's father models and teaches kindness and wisdom as means to confront hatred, reinforcing Islamic values as a form of faith-driven resistance. This intergenerational guidance strengthens Yusuf's ability to navigate his fear and confusion while encouraging him to act with integrity. The support and unity demonstrated by the Muslim community around him also reflect collective values that have been maintained and shared over time, emphasizing solidarity as a communal pillar.

The novel's depiction of family relationships, community support, and personal growth demonstrates how intergenerationally transmitted values help Yusuf affirm his identity and confront Islamophobia in ways rooted in his cultural and religious heritage.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyse how religious moderation is portrayed in *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* (2021) by Saadia Faruqi. Based on Creswell's statement that qualitative research investigates the interpretations made by people or groups towards a social or human problem (Lima & Newell-McLymont, 2021). A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore meanings, values, and perspectives in depth rather than measure them statistically (Moser A, 2017). In this case, the focus is limited to understanding how male and female characters from different generations embody and transmit the values of religious moderation in the face of Islamophobia.

The source data for this study consists of direct quotations, dialogues, and narrative descriptions from *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* that illustrate acts of moderation, such as tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and rejection of violence.

The main research instrument is note-taking (Creswell & Poth, 2016), which was used to identify and classify passages from the novel that show religious moderation. The data collection process involved several steps: reading the novel closely to understand its narrative and themes, highlighting passages where characters responded to discrimination, coding these instances based on Lukman's (2022) indicators of moderation, and tagging them according to the gender and generation of the characters.

The data analysis involves several key steps: first, data familiarization, where the researcher immerses themselves in the data by closely reading and re-reading the text to understand its depth and context; second, coding, where meaningful segments of the data are labeled with codes representing key concepts or ideas; third, theme development, in which these codes are grouped into broader themes that capture significant patterns related to the research questions; and finally,

interpretation, where the researcher analyzes how these themes manifest in different contexts or groups—in this case, how expressions of religious moderation by the older generation influence the younger generation.

FINDING

This section presents data from the novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* (2021) on religious moderation in the transmission of values across generations.

Based on the above framework, this section explained the data that represent moderate attitudes based on Lukman's (2021) concept of religious moderation, which describes how expressions of religious moderation by the older generation, such as Yusuf's parents, greatly influence Yusuf's character and attitude as a young person in dealing with prejudice and discrimination, using Boehnke's theory of intergenerational transmission of values. Values such as building interfaith relationships, controlling emotions, rejecting violence, and actively participating in society, as taught by his parents, instilled moderate attitudes in Yusuf.

1. Abba Values

The value that Abba presents is building interfaith relationships, where Abba invites Christian pastors to dine together.

“Please, eat with us! Farrah, bring some Coke! What will you have, young man? I’ve seen you before in my store, haven’t I? Welcome, welcome!” (p.114:2021)

This quote reflected a moment when a non-Muslim character invited Abba to eat together with sincere hospitality. The words' Welcome, welcome!' showed interfaith acceptance without prejudice. In the context of the novel, this scene appeared amid social tensions after the 9/11 tragedy, where Muslim communities were often suspected. Religious moderation is reflected in the act of building interfaith relationships through gestures such as greeting one another, inviting others to eat, and treating guests as family. These simple actions serve as the foundation for breaking down barriers of prejudice and fostering mutual trust between groups of different beliefs. Then there is Abba's attitude of avoiding conflict with a positive attitude, as quoted below.

Abba waved a hand. *“What things? Nothing happened. It was a very good memorial service. Very emotional.”* (p.115: 2021)

The above quote occurred when Pastor John Nielson apologised for the incident that took place during the parade. However, Abba responded by saying that there was no significant problem, even emphasising that the event was an emotional and meaningful commemoration. This attitude reflects the principle of religious moderation in the form of avoiding unnecessary conflict, such as conflicts that could worsen relations. In addition to Abba's social interactions, Abba also taught Yusuf to fight evil with kindness, as in the following quote.

“Good always overpowers bad, that is God’s promise to believers. You must remember that, Yusuf. No matter how bad things get, we have to have faith that God will help us.” (p.171:2021)

The above quote is Abba's advice to Yusuf, emphasising that faith in God's promise is the foundation for facing badness. The belief that 'Good always overpowers bad' is a form of religious moderation that emphasises patience, optimism, and moral resilience. In situations of discrimination or injustice, Abba teaches us to fight badness not with hatred, but by strengthening the value of goodness. This approach aligns with the principle of moderation, which promotes universal religious values—justice, goodness, and compassion—as an antidote to hatred. Moreover, Abba conveyed this value to Yusuf by promoting knowledge to counter prejudice, as illustrated in the following quote.

"The only way to fight bigotry and hatred is through accurate information. Human beings fear what they don't know, so the best thing is to get to know each other." (p.264:2021)

Abba's advice to Yusuf comes amid rising stereotypes against Muslims, where Yusuf and other characters realise that ignorance is the root of hatred. Intergenerational transmission of values is evident here through the dialogue and education that Abba imparts to Yusuf—that cross-cultural exchange of information and understanding is an effective way to erode bias. Education becomes a tool for building mutual understanding, which ultimately prevents conflict.

2. Amma Values

Values presented by Amma through speeches voicing injustice to large audiences, as in the quote below.

"My friends and neighbours, I thought it was time you heard from an actual Muslim." Amma's voice was strong and sure, like all the times Yusuf had been sick and needed reassurance that he'd be okay. *"I've lived in this town for thirteen years. I volunteered as lunch monitor when my son was in elementary school. I worked with my husband to set up his store, which you all shop at. Before this, I lived in Houston. My siblings and I were born there. "We are Americans just like you. In all the time you've known me, have you ever seen me do anything bad? The families who are building a mosque here have always been model citizens of this town. This country. It hurts my heart to hear my neighbours protest my right to worship God, as if I am less than them. It's the principle this great nation was founded on. It hurts my heart to see us all so divided, so angry."* (p.167 : 2021)

Amma's statement in front of a large audience emphasised her commitment as a Muslim who has contributed to the environment. Amma said, 'I thought it was time you heard from an actual Muslim,' meaning that she wanted others to hear from her as a Muslim who has made a positive contribution to society through her involvement as a volunteer, as a form of mutual respect. Amma demonstrated that harmonious religious practices are fostered through social responsibility and active community participation. Amma expressed her pain over protests against the construction of a mosque, asserting it as her right to a place of worship and rejecting the negative stereotypes often associated with Muslims. Amma's statement was delivered with firmness yet without hatred that could provoke conflict; she wanted to convey her message as a Muslim in a peaceful manner to dispel negative stereotypes about Muslims.

3. Yusuf's Attitudes as a Reflection of His Parents' Values

Yusuf emulated Abba and Amma's firm yet polite attitude, rejecting negative stereotypes with clear arguments without resorting to counterattacks. As quoted below:

"It's not Muz-lim. It's Muslim. And Islam means peace. Like, literally. So whatever those attackers were, they weren't Muslim." (p.126:2021)

Madison questions the 9/11 incident involving Muslims, to which Yusuf responds by firmly explaining to Madison that 'Islam means peace' and 'whatever those attackers were, they weren't Muslim.' In addition, Yusuf corrects Madison's statement 'Muz-lim' to 'It's Muslim.' A firm response without showing hatred, providing the correct understanding, rather than using an angry response that could lead to conflict. Yusuf's reaction was to correct the mistake with a firm statement, without judging Madison, and to emphasise the value of peace amidst prejudice. Yusuf gave Madison the opportunity to learn rather than judging her. Yusuf applied Abba's attitude of avoiding conflict when Ethan provoked Yusuf's anger by mocking him as a Muslim, as quoted below.

"Just ignore it," he told himself. (p.217:2021)

The above quote occurred when Yusuf was in the school cafeteria, and Ethan—his classmate who often bullied him and made racist comments—said something provocative: 'All you Americans, that is. We know the Mooz-lims don't celebrate Thanksgiving.' This statement was intended to belittle Yusuf's Muslim identity in front of other students. Instead of responding with anger or engaging in an open debate in the heated situation, Yusuf chose to calm himself and ignore the comment. The phrase "Just ignore it" is an example of self-control that he had learned from the values taught by Abba and Amma—particularly the principle of controlling emotions.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the values of religious moderation taught by Abba to Yusuf reflect the key indicators outlined by Lukman (2022), namely understanding differences, controlling emotions, rejecting violence, and actively participating in building peace. Abba's attitude of inviting Christian priests to eat together amid the tense social atmosphere following 9/11 serves as a tangible symbol of efforts to build interfaith relations. Abba's attitude holds profound significance in breaking down prejudices and opening spaces for dialogue, aligning with the concept of *wasathiyah* as a bridge between communities.

Abba's attitude in avoiding conflict with positive responses, for example, when he responded to Pastor Nielson's apology by emphasising that the commemoration event went well, shows the ability to manage emotions, which is the foundation of moderation. This is relevant to Boehnke's (2001) theory of value transmission, in which parents' non-confrontational responses serve as examples that are internalised by children. For Yusuf, this experience taught him that maintaining good relationships is more effective than responding to provocation with anger.

Besides teaching tolerance, Abba also instilled moral optimism in Yusuf, such as the belief that 'Good always overpowers bad.' This belief motivated Yusuf to view discrimination as a test

of faith, not as a reason to retaliate with hatred. This approach links religious teachings with psychological strategies for dealing with social pressure, thereby strengthening the moral resilience that characterises moderation. This approach effectively links religious teachings with psychological strategies to deal with social pressure. It demonstrates how faith can serve as a foundation for mental and emotional strength, fostering a mindset that resists bitterness and fosters hopeful endurance. This connection enriches our understanding of religious moderation, showing it as a practical tool for coping with challenges. Moreover, Abba's lessons serve as a means of intergenerational transmission of values, passing down moderation and resilience from one generation to the next. This process is crucial in shaping Muslim youth's identity and strategies for confronting Islamophobia in predominantly non-Muslim environments. It emphasizes that religious moderation is not only an individual stance but a cultural inheritance sustained within families.

Amma complements the values imparted by Abba with her advocacy role in the public sphere. Through her firm but non-confrontational speeches, Amma practises active social participation to defend the right to worship while correcting negative stereotypes about Muslims. This attitude aligns with Lukman's (2022) view that moderation is not only personal but also requires a contribution to social harmony. Amma's presence demonstrates that women within the context of Muslim families can be effective agents of moderation in the public sphere.

The difference in approach between Abba and Amma reflects gender variations in transmitting the value of moderation. Abba is more prominent in building interpersonal relationships and knowledge-based education, while Amma is more focused on public action and advocacy. Both provide complementary examples, which, according to Boehnke's theory (2001), can enhance the effectiveness of value transmission because children observe various behavioural models that are consistent in principle, despite differing in method. Abba embodies religious moderation through emotional control and knowledge-based dialogue. At the same time, Amma exemplifies it through public advocacy and social activism, together providing a balanced and complementary model for transmitting moderate values within the family.

Yusuf, as a member of the younger generation, demonstrates the internalisation of his parents' values in a way that is adaptive to his environment. He responds to Madison's questions with firm but polite clarification and chooses to ignore Ethan's provocations rather than provoking conflict. Both attitudes reflect self-control and the ability to convey a message of peace amid social pressure—proof that the transmission of moderate values from older to younger generations can be successful when accompanied by contextual learning.

From an intergenerational value-transmission perspective, Yusuf's family played an important role in instilling moderate values in an unsupportive social environment. Boehnke (2001) emphasises that parents' attitudes require more intensive transmission efforts to children in non-Muslim environments. This is evident in the consistency of Abba and Amma in demonstrating moderate behaviour, both in private and public settings, thereby providing Yusuf with a strong value framework to confront discrimination.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the novel *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero* clearly portrays how religious moderation can be taught and practised in Muslim families living in predominantly non-Muslim societies. The novel shows that moderation is built through understanding differences, controlling emotions, rejecting violence, and actively participating in society. These values are passed down from older to younger generations through daily examples and active involvement in the community. Abba teaches Yusuf through kindness, emotional control, and education, while Amma teaches through public speeches, fighting for rights, and showing that women can also be leaders in promoting peace. These two roles are different but work together to provide a complete example of moderation. The practical implications of this study suggest it can serve as a valuable model for Muslim families navigating identity and faith in multicultural societies. By demonstrating how moderate values can be transmitted through both private family relationships and public engagement, the findings offer guidance for character education aimed at fostering resilience, tolerance, and social harmony. This model emphasizes that religious moderation is not only a personal attitude but a lived practice that strengthens community cohesion and peaceful coexistence in diverse social settings.

Yusuf's actions in the novel show that he has well learned these values, using them to confront discrimination without hatred. This supports Boehnke's (2001) idea that values that differ from the majority require greater effort to pass on, and that the family plays a key role in this process. Thus, this study shows that religious moderation is not only a personal choice but also an attitude that can be passed down from one generation to the next. By combining the strengths of different genders and generations, a family can prepare the younger generation to deal with prejudice with peace, patience, and understanding.

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