



Exploration of Wasatiyyah Education for Females Above 7th Grade Under the Taliban Government in Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

Under Taliban rule, this study explores the potential and difficulties of incorporating Wasatiyyah, the Islamic concept of moderation, into Afghan women's education beyond the seventh grade. It uses qualitative approaches and incorporates secondary data from academic and institutional sources as well as interviews with female students, teachers, and government representatives. The results show that although Wasatiyyah provides a well-rounded educational philosophy based on gender equity, justice, and compassion, the Taliban's discriminatory and ideologically motivated regulations significantly limit its implementation. Contrary to Wasatiyyah inclusive ethos, these limitations have disadvantaged female students and restricted their access to education. Despite these obstacles, the study finds. Chances to integrate Wasatiyyah principles into community-based learning programs, presenting them as instruments to combat extremism and advance justice. This study advocates for international and local stakeholders to support educational reforms that are in line with these ideals and highlights the urgent need for Islamic-based educational frameworks that promote tolerance and moderation, especially in oppressive regimes.

Keywords: Wasatiyyah (Islamic Moderation); Female Education; Taliban Governance; Islamic Educational Policy; Gender Equity



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INTRODUCTION

Education constitutes a fundamental pillar of societal advancement, acting as a transformative mechanism that endows individuals with the knowledge and skills requisite for making significant contributions to their communities. It promotes social cohesion, economic development, and cultural enhancement, thereby serving a crucial function in the formation of progressive societies. In the context of Islamic education, the notion of Wasatiyyah, which is derived from the Arabic term signifying moderation, encapsulates the principles of equilibrium, inclusivity, and justice. Wasatiyyah functions as a foundational framework for directing educational practices, underscoring the repudiation of extremism, the encouragement of critical thinking, and the equitable treatment of all individuals, irrespective of gender or social standing.

Nevertheless, in Afghanistan, the attainment of these ideals encounters considerable obstacles. The governance of the Taliban has implemented rigorous policies that significantly restrict educational opportunities for females, especially those who are in grades beyond the seventh (Azizi & Program, 2023). These policies are in sharp opposition to the principles of Wasatiyyah, which promote equity and the empowerment of women through education. The exclusion of females from educational systems not only perpetuates gender inequality but also undermines the wider societal advantages associated with an inclusive and equitable educational framework (Walker et al., 2019).

The importance of Wasatiyyah education transcends mere theoretical discussion. It serves as an effective instrument for countering aberrant ideologies and promoting a culture of tolerance and coexistence (Abdullah et al., 2025). An education grounded in moderation empowers learners to critically engage with a variety of perspectives and to contest aberrant narratives. In contexts such as Afghanistan, where educational frameworks are influenced by ideological and political limitations, the application of Wasatiyyah principles may function as a counterbalance to oppressive practices, thereby providing a means to foster social cohesion and empowerment (Abdullah et al., 2025).

This research examines the relationship between Taliban policies and the availability of Wasatiyyah education for adolescent and young adult females. The objective is to comprehend the actual experiences of students and educators functioning within these limitations, utilizing their perspectives to illuminate both the challenges and opportunities inherent in this distinctive context. The research further investigates the potential for integrating the principles of Wasatiyyah into educational frameworks to foster moderation and inclusivity, even within restrictive contexts.

This research enhances the broader discourse on educational reform and the influence of Islamic moderation in mitigating gender inequality by analyzing the obstacles to female education under Taliban governance. It further elucidates the capacity of Wasatiyyah principles to cultivate resilience, empowerment, and social transformation within societies confronted with ideological rigidity and systemic oppression. Utilizing a blend of primary and secondary data, this study seeks to provide practical insights that can guide policy formulation, enhance educational practices, and inform future research regarding the function of moderation within the educational sphere.

1. How have the Taliban government's policies influenced the accessibility and implementation of Wasatiyyah education for females above the 7th grade?
2. What are the perceptions and experiences of educators and students regarding Wasatiyyah education for females above 7th grade under the Taliban government?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The execution of Wasatiyyah (moderation) education for adolescent females under Taliban rule encounters considerable obstacles that are deeply entrenched in cultural, political, and ideological challenges. This literature review analyzes pertinent studies regarding the challenges associated with the implementation of moderate Islamic education, with particular emphasis on policy implications, societal perceptions, and the interplay between education and extremism.

The conflict between extremist ideologies and moderate Islamic principles, especially within the context of repressive regimes. The governance of the Taliban serves as a pertinent illustration of how certain policies can obstruct the advancement of moderation, highlighting their rigid interpretations of Islamic law that are at odds with the principles of the Wasatiyyah framework. Such policies impede the advancement of an inclusive and equitable educational system for females, thereby underscoring the necessity for strategies that incorporate moderation while addressing political limitations. (Meleagrou-Hitchens et al., 2021).

The emergence of the Wasat Party in Egypt serves as a pertinent illustration of efforts to institutionalize Wasatiyyah principles within a constrained political landscape. While primarily centered on Egypt, the study offers valuable insights into how moderate Islamic education may be suppressed under authoritarian governance. It also underscores the difficulties associated with promoting inclusivity and gender equality within such environments (Stangl et al., 2019).

This study investigates the cultural challenges encountered by Muslim women in the United States, with a particular focus on their identity and commitment to Islamic practices, including the donning of the hijab. Although the context diverges from that of Afghanistan, the study highlights the influence of societal norms and perceptions on women's access to education and their ability to express themselves. In regions governed by the Taliban, analogous societal pressures, exacerbated by stringent policies, establish considerable obstacles to the education of women (Azizi & Program, 2023).

This document presents an analysis of the impact of extremist movements in North Africa on regional stability and governance. The study indicates that extremist ideologies frequently constrain educational opportunities, especially for women, as a component of a comprehensive strategy aimed at preserving control and inhibiting societal advancement. These findings are consistent with the Taliban's methodology, wherein stringent policies regarding female education impede the propagation of moderate Islamic principles such as Wasatiyyah (Abdullah et al., 2025).

presents a moral-situational action model aimed at elucidating the phenomenon of extremist violence, emphasizing the dual role of education in either fostering or mitigating radicalization. This model is essential for analyzing the potential impact of the lack of moderation-oriented curricula in regions under Taliban control, as it may play a significant role in the continuation of extremist ideologies, thereby further marginalizing women and girls (Saab & Al, 2021).

The reviewed literature highlights the urgent need for policies that align traditional Islamic values with the principles of moderation and inclusivity, while also recognizing the ideological and sociocultural barriers that must be addressed to ensure the effective implementation of Wasatiyyah-based education (Blanc & Roy, 2021).

The Influence of Taliban Educational Policies on Moderation and Inclusivity: An Examination of Wasatiyyah Education for Female Secondary School Students

The principle of wasatiyyah, or moderation, as articulated within Islamic thought, is fundamental to promoting inclusivity and equilibrium in educational settings, especially in contexts shaped by ideological and political limitations. This literature

review examines the conceptual underpinnings of wasatiyyah, its implementation within educational frameworks, and the obstacles presented by restrictive educational policies, exemplified by those of the Taliban, to female education. Through an analysis of academic literature concerning moderation and its relationship with gender and education, this review elucidates significant insights into the capacity of wasatiyyah to mitigate extremism and foster inclusivity.

Further analysis positions Wasatiyyah as a foundational principle for Islamic movements, highlighting its role in steering interpretations of Islam away from radicalism. Rather than functioning solely as a theological concept, Wasatiyyah is articulated as a pragmatic framework for fostering social harmony and balance. Adherence to this principle enables Islamic movements to reconcile tradition with modernity, thereby creating social environments that support equity and the fair treatment of all individuals, including women. These insights suggest that Wasatiyyah offers a counter-narrative to exclusionary and restrictive practices, making it particularly relevant in contexts shaped by Taliban governance (Ruhullah et al., 24 C.E.).

Education functions as a pivotal domain for the application of the principles of wasatiyyah. The establishment of Egypt's Was at Party, demonstrating how the party's strategic approach integrated principles of moderation to mitigate extremist ideologies and foster democratic participation. Although the study primarily examines political movements, its ramifications for the field of education are considerable. Educational policies rooted in wasatiyyah can promote critical thinking, tolerance, and respect for diversity, thereby cultivating an environment in which both male and female students can flourish (Abdullah, 2025).

Islamic principles in addressing radicalism and extremism in Indonesia. They contend that the adoption of the "beauty of Islam," which is grounded in wasatiyyah, is crucial for the development of educational frameworks that effectively counter extremist ideologies. The authors underscore the significance of inclusive curricula that accentuate the principles of moderation and gender equality. This viewpoint is consistent with initiatives aimed at opposing policies that marginalize female students, illustrating that education grounded in wasatiyyah can function as an effective instrument for promoting inclusivity (Wagiman, 2025). The educational policies implemented by the Taliban, which are marked by limitations on female education, stand in sharp opposition to the principles of wasatiyyah. (Ouassini & Ouassini, 2020) examine how counterterrorism and religious reform initiatives in Morocco have employed women's empowerment as a strategic approach to counteract extremist ideologies. Their research highlights the capacity of education to foster moderation and inclusivity, standing in stark contrast to the Taliban's methodology, which subverts these principles.

Investigates the perceptions of radicalism among students in Indonesia and Malaysia, elucidating how extremist ideologies may impact educational environments. His research underscores the significance of cultivating critical thinking and advocating for principles of moderation to mitigate the impact of radical influences. The significance of the study about the policies of the Taliban is underscored by its focus on the influence of education in molding societal attitudes. By limiting access to education for women, the Taliban not only perpetuate gender inequality but also undermine the wider societal advantages associated with a balanced and inclusive educational framework (Toran, 2024).

The implementation of wasatiyyah within educational policies carries considerable ramifications for female students. (Elsayed, 2024) argues that moderation promotes gender equity, advocating for policies that guarantee equal access to education for both males and females. This viewpoint contests the Taliban's repressive policies,

underscoring the incongruity between their actions and the Islamic tenets of equilibrium and justice. Wasatiyyah can serve as a guiding principle for educational reforms that emphasize inclusivity. By incorporating the principles of moderation into educational curricula and school governance, educators can cultivate environments in which female students feel esteemed and empowered. This methodology challenges the exclusionary practices of the Taliban and highlights the transformative potential of education rooted in Islamic principles (Mohamed, 2018).

Further underscores the significance of inclusive education in the fight against extremism. Their research indicates that curricula that emphasize wasatiyyah may function as a safeguard against radical ideologies, fostering critical thinking and mutual respect. For female students, such educational environments provide avenues for personal and intellectual development, thereby contesting the narrative of exclusion fostered by restrictive policies (Juvonen et al., 2019).

The implementation of education grounded in the principles of wasatiyyah necessitates a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy. (Ouassini & Ouassini, 2020) underscore the significance of incorporating women into educational leadership and decision-making processes. By empowering female educators and administrators, educational institutions can exemplify the principles of moderation and inclusivity. The necessity for curricula that confront radicalism and foster principles of moderation. For female pupils, this signifies not only access to educational resources but also the opportunity to interact with material that confronts and challenges discriminatory norms. By placing a premium on wasatiyyah within educational policies and practices, educators can cultivate environments that both include and empower female students (Mlambo, 2024).

The Function of Wasatiyyah Education in Advancing Gender Equity: Perspectives from Female Students and Educators in Secondary Schools Operating under the Taliban Regime. The principle of wasatiyyah, or moderation, plays a crucial role in advancing gender equity within Islamic educational frameworks, especially in the context of challenging socio-political regimes. This literature review investigates how wasatiyyah education promotes gender equity, utilizing insights gathered from female pupils and educators in secondary schools operating under the Taliban regime. The analyzed studies offer a sophisticated comprehension of moderation within Islamic contexts, its interplay with gender equity, and the socio-political obstacles presented by restrictive educational policies.

The moderation in the establishment of Egypt's Wasat Party highlights the strategic and ideological transition from radicalism to more balanced methodologies. This study demonstrates how the principles of moderation can effectively counteract extremism and foster inclusive governance. While Wickham's research predominantly centers on political movements, it highlights the potential of wasatiyyah as a foundational framework for promoting equitable educational environments. This viewpoint is especially pertinent in contexts such as Afghanistan, where the Taliban's repressive policies undermine the principles of gender equity (Hussain Mir, 2024).

Moderation among international students in Malaysia offers significant insights into the implementation of wasatiyyah within educational contexts. Their research underscores the influence of cultural and institutional contexts on the comprehension and execution of moderation. For female pupils under the Taliban regime, these insights indicate that the integration of wasatiyyah principles may serve to reconcile traditional Islamic values with modern educational requirements, thereby promoting gender equity and inclusivity (Rahimi & Christabell, 2025).

Islamic extremist movements in North Africa, investigating the interregional challenges they pose. His findings emphasize the significance of education in countering extremism and fostering moderation. By harmonizing educational policies with the principles of wasatiyyah, educational institutions can effectively confront the socio-political obstacles to gender equity, thereby providing female students with enhanced opportunities for both personal and academic development. Abdalla's research is especially pertinent for comprehending how wasatiyyah can function as a counter-narrative to exclusionary practices (Aoudeh, 2023).

The dynamics of terrorism and counterterrorism strategies within the context of Saudi Arabia, highlighting the significance of religious reform in the fight against extremist ideologies. Their research underscores the transformative potential of education grounded in moderation as a means to counteract radicalism. For female pupils under the Taliban regime, such methodologies may offer a means of empowerment, contesting the restrictive policies that inhibit their access to education (Almakaty, 2025).

The underscore the significance of cultivating inclusive educational environments that embody the principles of wasatiyyah. Their findings indicate that moderation in education not only mitigates extremism but also fosters values of equity and respect. For educators and students within schools governed by the Taliban, these insights underscore the significance of incorporating wasatiyyah into curricula and pedagogical methodologies to cultivate a balanced and inclusive educational atmosphere (Abdullah et al., 2025).

The execution of wasatiyyah education under the Taliban regime poses considerable challenges. (Bari, 2019) delineates the socio-political obstacles that impede the adoption of moderate approaches within conservative contexts. These challenges are exacerbated in environments where female education is limited, highlighting the necessity for strategies that integrate wasatiyyah principles with the prevailing cultural and political contexts. Societal attitudes and institutional policies influence educational outcomes. For female students under the Taliban, confronting these challenges necessitates a unified endeavor to advance the principles of moderation and inclusivity at both institutional and community levels. By cultivating a culture of dialogue and comprehension, educators can establish environments in which female students feel esteemed and empowered (Hamed Isar, 2024).

The examined literature highlights the transformative potential of wasatiyyah education in advancing gender equity. (Khawar Butt, 2021) underscore the significance of cultural and institutional contexts in influencing perceptions of moderation, positing that customized strategies are imperative for effectively addressing the distinct challenges encountered by female students under the Taliban regime.

Underscores the significance of education in combating radicalization, accentuating the necessity for curricula that embody the principles of moderation and inclusivity. For educators, this necessitates the implementation of pedagogical practices that emphasize critical thinking, mutual respect, and gender equity (Qadri et al., 2024). along underscore the significance of empowering female educators and students through an educational framework grounded in Wasatiyyah. By harmonizing educational policies with the tenets of moderation, educational institutions can cultivate environments conducive to the flourishing of female students, thereby contesting the narrative of exclusion propagated by restrictive policies (Hussain Mir, 2024). Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of Wasatiyyah Education for Female Secondary Students under the Taliban Regime: Insights from Educators and Students. The notion of Wasatiyyah, or moderation, within the context of Islam has emerged as a pivotal topic in educational frameworks, especially in areas where Islamic principles converge with

socio-political dynamics. This literature review examines the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of Wasatiyyah education for female secondary students under the Taliban regime, incorporating insights from both educators and students. Utilizing significant research, the review examines the theoretical foundations, socio-cultural influences, and practical implications of Wasatiyyah in the field of education.

The Qur'anic principle of Wasatiyyah accentuates the importance of balance and moderation in all facets of life, advocating firmly against extremism and excess. This principle holds particular significance within educational environments, where students are instructed to cultivate critical thinking, ethical conduct, and social cohesion. Kamali's scholarship offers a comprehensive theoretical framework that establishes a connection between Wasatiyyah and fundamental universal values, including justice, compassion, and inclusivity (Barrett & Twycross, 2018).

The socio-political environment in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime presents considerable obstacles to the implementation of Wasatiyyah education, especially for female students. The Taliban's stringent policies regarding women's education are in stark opposition to the principles of moderation and inclusivity. (Rahimi & Christabell, 2025) examines the ways in which cultural and political obstacles frequently restrict women's access to education, emphasizing the challenges faced by Muslim women in environments dominated by patriarchal interpretations of Islam. Although her research primarily examines the experiences of Muslim American women, the similarities in the challenges encountered by Afghan women are readily apparent.

Comparative analysis that examines the perceptions of international students in Malaysia concerning moderation within the context of Islam. Their findings indicate that educational institutions are instrumental in the formation of moderate Islamic identities. Nevertheless, they advise that socio-cultural biases and political influences may compromise these initiatives. Within the Afghan context, these biases are exacerbated by the ideological inflexibility of the Taliban, resulting in a contentious atmosphere for Wasatiyyah education (Toran, 2024).

Examine the contributions of women in countering extremist ideologies in Morocco, highlighting the capacity of female educators and pupils to serve as catalysts for change. Their research emphasizes the significance of empowering women through education as a means to confront and counter extremist narratives. This viewpoint is consistent with the objectives of Wasatiyyah education, which aims to foster moderation and encourage critical engagement with religious texts (Ibnu Sholeh et al., 2025).

Notwithstanding the challenges, numerous opportunities are present for the incorporation of Wasatiyyah principles into female education within the context of the Taliban administration. A notable opportunity exists in harnessing Islamic teachings that explicitly promote the education of women. (Rahimi & Christabell, 2025) posits that the Qur'anic emphasis on knowledge and education transcends gender distinctions, thereby offering a theological foundation for the promotion of educational access for women.

Singapore's approach to combating violent extremism through educational reforms accentuates the significance of religious moderation. By employing a comparable methodology, Afghan educators can develop curricula that integrate Wasatiyyah principles, thereby cultivating resilience against extremist ideologies. Basit's research illustrates that the incorporation of moderation within educational frameworks can foster inclusive communities, a pursuit that is congruent with the overarching aims of (Mohamed, 2018).

Comprehending the viewpoints of both educators and students is essential for the successful implementation of Wasatiyyah education. Educators assume a pivotal role in

the design and implementation of curricula, whereas the engagement and acceptance of students are critical factors that influence the success of these initiatives. (Abdullah et al., 2025) underscore the significance of teacher training programs designed to furnish educators with the requisite knowledge and skills necessary for the effective dissemination of Wasatiyyah principles. In the context of Afghanistan, such initiatives could prioritize the consideration of cultural sensitivities and the navigation of political constraints.

The viewpoints of students, as emphasized by (Hamidi, 2024), illustrate the influence of socio-cultural contexts on their comprehension of moderation. Afghan female pupils, who are constrained by stringent regulations and restricted opportunities, may view Wasatiyyah education as a means of empowerment. Nevertheless, their experiences highlight the necessity for structural reforms to guarantee access and equity. The implementation of Wasatiyyah education within the context of the Taliban regime necessitates a meticulous navigation of both political and cultural landscapes. (Ouassini & Ouassini, 2020) propose that grassroots initiatives spearheaded by women may play a pivotal role in fostering moderation. In Afghanistan, such initiatives may encompass community-oriented educational programs that are congruent with Islamic principles while simultaneously promoting women's rights.

Policy reforms are equally critical. (Ibnu Sholeh et al., 2025) underscores the necessity of governmental assistance in cultivating an environment that promotes educational moderation. In the context of Afghanistan, this entails engaging in negotiations with the Taliban to emphasize the importance of educational access for women and to incorporate Wasatiyyah principles into the national curricula. H1: Absorptive capacity has a direct and positive effect on firm innovation. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between Taliban educational policies, access to female education above the seventh grade, and the role of Wasatiyyah education examined through qualitative inquiry.

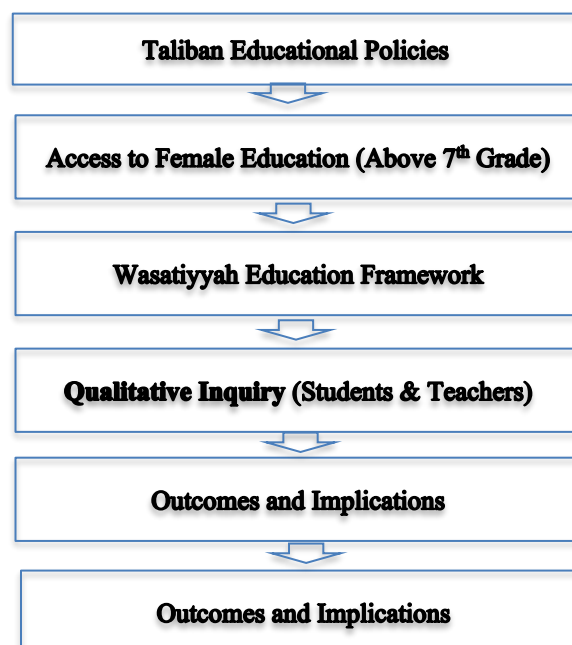


Figure 1: Research Model of the Study

RESEARCH METHOD

This study examines the implementation and challenges of Wasatiyyah education for female students above the 7th grade under the Taliban government in Afghanistan. A qualitative research design was employed to explore participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and the sociopolitical constraints shaping access to education. The study is grounded in a literature-informed framework to connect empirical findings with broader debates on education, governance, and Islamic moderation.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four purposively selected participants: two female students from different provinces, one public school teacher, and one private school teacher. These participants were selected due to their direct engagement with female education and their ability to provide informed insights into the application of Wasatiyyah principles under current conditions.

Interviews were conducted through secure online platforms (e.g., WhatsApp) due to security and accessibility constraints. The semi-structured format enabled participants to freely articulate their experiences regarding educational access, institutional barriers, and the role of Wasatiyyah in their learning environments. All interviews were recorded (with consent), transcribed verbatim, and prepared for analysis.

The study employed thematic analysis following the Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke framework, which involves six systematic phases: familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and reporting.

The coding process combined inductive and deductive approaches. Initial open coding was conducted to identify emerging patterns from participant narratives. These codes were then grouped into broader categories aligned with key themes such as access restrictions, psychological impacts, and interpretations of Wasatiyyah. A second round of coding refined these categories to ensure coherence, consistency, and alignment with the research objectives.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study applied data triangulation and member checking. Triangulation was achieved by integrating interview data with secondary sources, including policy documents and reports from international organizations. Member checking was conducted by sharing summarized findings with selected participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. These strategies strengthen the reliability and validity of the analysis despite the limited sample size.

Secondary data were used to contextualize and support the primary findings. Sources included peer-reviewed academic literature, policy documents, and reports from organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and Afghanistan's Ministry of Education. Historical and comparative studies of female education in Afghanistan, including references to institutions such as Malala High School and Kabul University, were also reviewed to situate the findings within a broader educational and historical context.

This study adhered to standard ethical research practices. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and all identifying information was removed from transcripts and reporting. Given the sensitive context, particular care was taken to ensure data protection, including secure storage of digital files and restricted access to research materials. Participation was voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the findings derived from semi-structured interviews with two female students and two teachers (one from a public school and one from a private school), complemented by an analysis of relevant academic literature and institutional reports. The findings are organized thematically to reflect the study's qualitative design and its focus on Wasatiyyah education for females above the seventh grade under Taliban governance.

Findings from both participant narratives and secondary literature indicate that Wasatiyyah education is generally perceived as a framework emphasizing balance, moderation, ethical conduct, and social harmony. However, its practical understanding and internalization among female students are significantly shaped by instructional methods and sociopolitical contexts.

Studies conducted outside Afghanistan demonstrate that Islamic education instructors play a pivotal role in cultivating Wasatiyyah values among secondary-level students. For example, research in Kuwait revealed that although Islamic education teachers actively promote moderation, their efforts are constrained by limited resources, insufficient professional training, and cultural resistance, which in turn affect students' perception and application of Wasatiyyah principles (Alabdulhadi & Alkandari, 2024). Similar patterns emerged in the present study, where teachers emphasized the difficulty of translating moderation into practice under restrictive educational environments.

Evidence from Indonesia further highlights the importance of contextualized pedagogical approaches. Female students exposed to text- and context-based discussions developed a more nuanced understanding of religious moderation, particularly when Wasatiyyah was linked to real-life social challenges (Qaderi et al., 2023). Although this context differs from Afghanistan, it provides a comparative lens suggesting that Afghan female students' limited exposure to dialogical and applied learning weakens their engagement with Wasatiyyah concepts.

Additionally, studies focusing on early integration of religious moderation indicate that foundational exposure to Wasatiyyah values contributes to balanced perspectives later in education (Mashuri et al., 2022). Participants in this study suggested that the absence of such foundations, especially after the closure of schools for girls above the sixth grade, has disrupted continuity in moral and intellectual development. Similarly, structured and systematically assessed moderation-oriented curricula in higher education institutions have been shown to enhance students' acceptance of Wasatiyyah principles (Mukhibat et al., 2024), a framework largely unavailable to Afghan females beyond the seventh grade.

The findings reveal that female students' engagement with Wasatiyyah education is influenced by interconnected pedagogical, cultural, and institutional factors. Educators emerged as central facilitators of moderation, not only through content delivery but also through role modeling. Consistent with (Alabdulhadi & Alkandari, 2024), teachers in this study reported that limited training opportunities and fear of scrutiny restricted their ability to openly address moderation, tolerance, and critical thinking.

Pedagogical approaches also significantly affect engagement. Interactive methods that connect Islamic principles with contemporary issues were identified as more effective in fostering student interest and understanding (Byrd et al., 2018). However, participants noted that such approaches are largely absent under current Afghan policies, where rote learning and ideological conformity dominate instructional practices.

Cultural context further shapes engagement. In pluralistic societies such as Malaysia, Wasatiyyah is closely associated with coexistence and tolerance, making it more socially appealing to students (Wagiman, 2024). In contrast, Afghan female

students face cultural and gender-based constraints that limit their participation in discussions on moderation, thereby reducing their sense of agency and engagement.

Curriculum design was also identified as a decisive factor. State-endorsed Wasatiyyah initiatives are most effective when aligned with students' needs and lived realities (Haqpana & Tsouroufli, 2023). Participants emphasized that curricula addressing gender equity, social justice, and personal development within an Islamic framework are more meaningful for female students. However, such content is currently absent or inaccessible for girls beyond the seventh grade in Afghanistan.

The findings clearly indicate that the Taliban's restrictive governance constitutes the most significant barrier to the implementation of Wasatiyyah education for females. Gender-based educational bans severely limit access to schooling, learning resources, and safe spaces for intellectual engagement. As Ireiqat (2014) notes, rigid interpretations of Islamic law often marginalize women, restricting their educational and social participation. This reality was echoed by female participants, who described limited opportunities, forced confinement at home, and exclusion from formal education.

Ideological rigidity further undermines moderation-based education. (UNESCO, 2022) argues that extremist governance frameworks suppress moderate Islamic discourse, framing it as incompatible with authority. Teachers in this study reported fear of censorship and professional repercussions when addressing themes of tolerance or balance, effectively silencing Wasatiyyah pedagogy.

Institutional weaknesses compound these challenges. According to (Ahmadi et al., 2024), the absence of supportive educational policies and resources undermines the delivery of comprehensive Islamic education. Female educators, in particular, face restricted access to professional development and instructional materials, further limiting educational quality.

Cultural misinterpretations of Wasatiyyah also impede implementation. In patriarchal contexts, moderation is sometimes misconstrued as Westernized or un-Islamic, generating resistance from families and communities (UNICEF, 2022). Participants noted that such perceptions hinder parental support for girls' education and reduce community acceptance of moderation-oriented learning.

Participants' Perspectives on Sustainable Implementation of Wasatiyyah Education: Participants emphasized that effective and sustainable Wasatiyyah education for females requires a multi-level approach. Key measures identified include ensuring safe learning environments, increasing community and parental awareness, providing equitable access to educational resources, and investing in teacher training. Female students highlighted the importance of encouragement and motivation from families, while teachers stressed the need for inclusive curricula and pedagogical freedom.

Participants also underscored the role of religious leaders and community figures in legitimizing girls' education through Islamic discourse. While religious advocacy could potentially dismantle cultural barriers, participants noted that under current conditions, religious leaders supporting female education are largely silenced, whereas extremist narratives align with state policy.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while Wasatiyyah education holds significant potential for fostering balance, ethical awareness, and social cohesion, its implementation for female students above the seventh grade in Afghanistan remains severely constrained by political repression, gender-based exclusion, and institutional fragility.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate a clear divergence between current educational restrictions in Afghanistan and the principles of Wasatiyyah, which emphasize justice, balance, inclusion, and the pursuit of knowledge. The prohibition of girls' education beyond grade 7 contradicts core Islamic teachings that promote learning for all, regardless of gender. Participants' accounts—particularly from female students and educators—highlight not only material deprivation but also psychological consequences, including loss of identity, reduced motivation, and intellectual stagnation. These findings indicate that Wasatiyyah is not merely neglected but constrained within restrictive interpretations of religious authority.

At the same time, limited forms of alternative education such as online and community-based initiatives illustrate that even partial exposure to Wasatiyyah-oriented learning can foster resilience, ethical awareness, and critical thinking. This supports the theoretical claim that Wasatiyyah functions as both a moral framework and a protective mechanism against exclusionary or extremist practices. The Afghan case contrasts sharply with experiences in countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Morocco, where Wasatiyyah principles have been more systematically institutionalized within education systems. In these contexts, policies generally support gender inclusion, religious moderation, and civic responsibility, often through state-backed curricula and teacher training programs.

Unlike Afghanistan, where political constraints limit both access and discourse, these countries demonstrate how alignment between religious values and state policy can enhance educational equity and social cohesion. The comparison suggests that the effectiveness of Wasatiyyah education depends not only on theological acceptance but also on political and institutional support. Furthermore, the results clearly showed how important educators and religious leaders are. Students' ethical worldviews can be shaped by teachers who uphold Wasatiyyah norms, and religious leaders, if allowed the opportunity, could influence public opinion in favor of female education. However, under the Taliban administration, both communities are seriously threatened. Thus, the political will and social space to freely practice moderation are just as important to the longevity of Wasatiyyah education as ideological congruence. This study extends Wasatiyyah theory by illustrating its vulnerability to political instrumentalization. While existing literature conceptualizes Wasatiyyah as a stable Islamic principle, the findings show that its application is highly contingent on governance structures. In restrictive regimes, Wasatiyyah may be marginalized or selectively interpreted, limiting its capacity to promote equity and inclusion. The study also reinforces the role of education as a key site for operationalizing Wasatiyyah, suggesting that access to inclusive learning environments is essential for translating abstract principles into lived practice.

The findings highlight the need for multi-level interventions. International organizations and donors should prioritize sustained funding mechanisms that support alternative and community-based education for girls. Educational stakeholders should also invest in teacher capacity-building programs that integrate Wasatiyyah principles into pedagogical practices. Furthermore, engaging religious leaders and local communities is critical to fostering broader acceptance of female education. Policy frameworks that combine religious legitimacy with educational inclusion are more likely to succeed in conservative and politically constrained contexts. This study is limited by its small sample size and reliance on remote data collection, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Security and access constraints also limited direct engagement with policymakers. Future research should incorporate larger and more

diverse samples and explore longitudinal impacts of educational exclusion and alternative learning models in conflict-affected settings.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the study's findings, Wasatiyyah provides a potent Islamic framework for advancing social harmony, gender equality, and educational justice when it is properly understood and implemented. It directly opposes the Taliban's exclusionary policies, which enforce a limited and frequently radical interpretation of Islamic teachings and prevent girls from receiving an education past the seventh grade. The suppression of female education in Afghanistan is not only a human rights concern but a theological and ethical contradiction within Islam itself.

The promise of Wasatiyyah is still apparent despite the grim circumstances. It can be used as a tool for ideological resistance, resilience building, and community transformation. Even in settings of structural oppression, females can acquire a strong sense of identity, critical thinking abilities, and ethical foundation through moderate Islamic education. The results of the study indicate that Wasatiyyah is a useful instrument for social change rather than only a theological abstraction.

Curriculum Reform: Create inclusive, contextually aware curricula that support gender equity and integrate Wasatiyyah ideals. Teacher Training: Give teachers the theological and pedagogical resources they need to Community Engagement: Use Islamic justification to encourage female education by enlisting the help of parents, elders, and local authorities. Encourage Online and Alternative Learning: Increase the availability of flexible, safe learning environments that serve underprivileged and displaced females. International Advocacy and Pressure: Encourage Muslim academics and international groups to support Islamic values of justice and education and to hold governments responsible.

In the end, this study confirms that Wasatiyyah is an essential framework for reestablishing Afghan females' access to education. It urges bravery, cooperation, and innovative opposition to guarantee that half of the people does not lose their right to education, which is protected by both international law and Islam. Not only is it morally and religiously required to empower girls through Wasatiyyah education, but it is also crucial for Afghanistan's peace, development, and prosperity.

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