Teaching Religious Moderation by Islamic Education Lecturers: Best Practices at Three Islamic Universities in Mataram City

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ABSTRACT

The study underscores the criticial role of religious moderation in preventing intolerance and radicalism among university students, particularly in Mataram city. The integration of religious moderation in the learning process has not been has been lacking, despite their crucial position in developing high-quality, balanced educational materials. This qualitative research investigates the teaching practices of religious moderation among Islamic education lecturers, employing in-depth interviews with lecturers from three Islamic universities in Mataram City. The findings reveal that religious moderation is taught using a moderate narrative approach that is integrated with other subjects. This is supported by various activity programs centered on moderation. Teaching occurs within a transformative-moderative model that aligns with academic objectives and is disseminated through social media platforms. This research highlights a significant gap in the teaching of religious moderation, both formally and informally, and emphasizes the importance of nurturing this core Islamic principle through social and religious engagement. The study recommends widespread communication of religious moderation goals through inclusive, web-based platforms to promote moderate, just, and tolerant narratives. Additionally, it calls for Islamic education lecturers to carefully design lesson plans and restructure the learning process around religious moderation.

ABSTRAK

Moderasi beragama merupakan salah satu cara untuk mencegah intoleransi dan radikalisme di kalangan mahasiswa. Namun, praktik mengajar moderasi beragama dari dosen kepada mahasiswa belum banyak dilakukan dalam proses pembelajaran, padahal dosen menjadi subjek krusial dan bertanggung jawab dalam mendesain materi ajar yang efektif, moderat dan bermutu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan praktik mengajar moderasi beragama di kalangan dosen pendidikan Islam. Penelitian kualitatif ini fokus menggunakan wawancara mendalam kepada para dosen dari tiga Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam di Kota Mataram. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik mengajar moderasi beragama dilakukan dengan pola narasi yang moderat dan terintegratif dengan matakuliah lain, ditunjang dengan berbagai program kegiatan berbasis moderasi beragama, disampaikan melalui model transformatif-moderatif (objektif-akademis) dan pemanfaatan media sosial, seperti WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok, dan Instagram. Kontribusi unik penelitian ini yaitu moderasi beragama sebagai salah satu ciri Islam Rahmatan Lil 'alamin tidak cukup diajarkan melalui pendidikan formal dan nonformal tetapi perlu dirawat melalui aktivitas sosial dan keagamaan. Oleh karena itu, riset ini merekomendasikan pengarusutamaan tujuan moderasi beragama perlu diperjelas melalui ruang komunikasi inklusif dan persuasif secara masif, sistemik, komprehensif dan berbasis website untuk membangun narasi dan sikap yang moderat, adil, toleran, dan berkeadaban agar tidak terjadi kesalahan persepsi dan penerapan. Lebih lanjut, implikasi hasil penelitian ini mendorong para dosen pendidikan Islam untuk mendesain rencana pembelajaran dengan baik dan merekonstruksi proses pembelajaran berbasis moderasi beragama bagi mahasiswa.

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Introduction

The recent rise in religious intolerance and radicalism among Indonesian students has led to negative perceptions of educational institutions. A study conducted by the Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Jakarta in 2021 indicate that 30.16%, roughly one in three Indonesian students, exhibit a low or very low level of religious tolerance. This is a significant proportion, and the findings vary by type of university. A breakdown by university reveals that students from Religious-Based Universities exhibit the lowest levels of tolerance, followed by private universities (PTS), Perguruan Tinggi Negeri (PTN), and Civil Service College (PTK) (PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021a). A further study underscores that while Muslim students display tolerance toward religious diversity and plurality, they exhibit intolerance toward judgments on sacred texts, the establishment of places of worship, and the practices of other faiths (Suntana & Tresnawaty, 2022). According to Mun'im Sirry, this phenomenon raises the theory of half-hearted tolerance, where a person has an openness to tolerance, whatever the definition, but on the other hand, they agree that tolerance still has limits. The phenomenon can also be approached with conversion theory because a person undergoes a rapid change after being previously open and then immediately radicalized (Sirry, 2023).

The aforementioned study also highlights pervasive instability in both external and internal empathy values across various groups, including students, lecturers, and education personnel, within three state Islamic universities (UIN Jakarta, UIN Bandung, and UIN Yogyakarta) (PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021b). This issue presents a significant challenge to the promotion of religious moderation within higher education. The findings strongly support the notion that educational institutions are deeply entangled in the phenomena of religious intolerance and radicalism. Consequently, universities must develop anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies and establish proactive platforms for prevention to address these challenges (Ezzy et al., 2022)This proactive approach is essential to prevent individual conflicts, outbreaks of violence, radical movements, and the escalating threat of terrorism (Muhammad, 2020). Another case related to the rejection of some Islamic preachers who are considered Wahabi is a form of intolerance that massively occurs among Indonesian people. As long as the *ustadz*, or preacher, does not trigger horizontal conflicts between religious communities, his presence can still be accepted by the Indonesian people. The case underscores the existence of entrenched religious truth claims among believers, often leading to the exclusion of other faiths and the establishment of an exclusive-conservative monopoly on truth (Muammar Bakry et al., 2018).

SETARA Institute's research report on the Index of Tolerant City (Indeks Kota Toleran - IKT) 2022 shows that the average score of IKT results from the publication of 2015 to 2022 shows that the condition of tolerance in Indonesia is still stagnant and has not reached a significant value (SETARA Institute, 2023). This IKT report shows that Mataram City is in the 10 lowest tolerance score cities with a final score of 4,387 (rank 89 or rank 6 from the bottom) (Yosarie et al., 2024). On the other hand, the Indeks Kerukunan Umat Beragama (KUB) in the last three years has continued to increase, starting from 2021 to 2023, namely 72.39, 73.09, and 76.02. Interestingly, the 2022 KUB report shows a Religious Moderation Index of 80.36. This figure includes indicators of national commitment (84.74), tolerance (70.39), non-violence (85.08), and adaptive to local culture (81.24) (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2023).

In portraying the same issue, Convey Report Indonesia conducted a survey in 2018 regarding the religious attitudes and conduct of Islamic Religious Education teachers and lecturers, and revealed a concerning trend of radicalism and intolerance permeating their thoughts and behaviors (Rangga Eka Saputra et al., 2018). For this reason, there needs to be a system of mainstreaming religious moderation through the education process (Aflahah et al., 2023), seminars (Purwanto et al., 2019), group guidance (Syahbudin et al., 2023), Islamic guidance (Mujahid, 2021), religious literacy (Hanafi et al., 2022), religious discussions, and preventive measures to ward off radicalism (A. N. Aziz & Tago, 2023). On the contrary, empirical evidence indicates a lack of widespread assessment of teaching methodologies concerning religious moderation among lecturers. Presently, such evaluations are predominantly individual-centric and lack a cohesive system, thereby hindering the effective dissemination of religious moderation concepts to students (Ali, 2020). Similarly, there's limited optimization in conveying practical aspects and conducting evaluations within this context.

An interview with Mr. Muhammad Taisir, a lecturer in Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) at Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Mr. Rukimin, a PAI lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram (UMM), and Mrs. Baiq Mulianah, the Chancellor of Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama (UNU) Nusa Tenggara Barat, indicate that systematic efforts to mainstream religious moderation on campuses remain limited. This limitation stems from the absence of explicit inclusion of religious moderation in the structure or Ortaker (Organisasi Tata Kerja) and Statuta (Statutes) of Higher Education, leading to a lack of integration within the curriculum. Additionally, insufficient funding and facilities further impede the implementation of activity programs centered around religious moderation (WW.1.1. MT, 26-10-2022; WW.3.1. R, 2-11-22; WW.2.1. BM, 30-11-2022).

It is imperative to incorporate religious moderation into the curriculum of Islamic religious universities. This measure is not merely a response to prevailing issues such as the escalation of intolerant behaviors, dehumanization, and radicalism. It also underscores the proactive role that Islamic religious universities can play in combatting these issues. By conceptualizing, analyzing, and guiding students in embracing the values and attitudes of religious moderation, universities can actively contribute to eradicating such cases and promoting a more inclusive and harmonious society (Suprapto, 2020), Universities also need to adapt well to managing strategies and selecting teaching materials, methods, and approaches to learning based on religious moderation (Tabroni & Idham, 2023; Aly & Thoyibi, 2020; Afwadzi & Miski, 2021; Kamaludin et al., 2021) with Islamic pedagogical principles,(Kadafi & Ulpah, 2023) so that the mainstreaming of religious moderation in higher education is carried out comprehensively (Gaffar et al., 2022). Lecturers need to teach a good understanding and practice of religious moderation to students through an inclusive learning process (Ma'arif et al., 2022), critical thinking (Ainuri et al., 2023), and moderate use of religious texts with strategies and methods that emphasize aspects of social reality to ward off acts of intolerance and radicalism (Benny Afwadzi et al., 2024). Previous research has identified a typology of religious moderation in higher education, characterized by an integrative approach that involves institutional and cultural interpolation. This model includes the internalization of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) courses through symbolic-paradigmatic schemes, the mainstreaming of students, and the engagement of extra-campus organizations (Burhanuddin & Ilmi, 2022).

Several other studies have shown that the best way to build religious moderation in higher education is by opening up perspectives on religious moderation (Abdul Hopid et al., 2023), accepting differences, fair, balanced, tolerant, and upholding the value of diversity between religious communities (Fauziyah & Hidayati, 2022; Helmy et al., 2021), Religious moderation training practices (Sinaga, 2022), scientific integration (Hanun, 2023), implementing an eclectic curriculum that reflects a strong emphasis on distinctive moderation values across theoretical, practical, and ideological domains is essential (Nasir, 2021), implementing internal monitoring and empowerment models to strengthen religious moderation in higher education (Shaleh et al., 2023), Universities become the foremost laboratories for developing and implementing religious moderation, the results of which are then given to other educational institutions (Jamaludin, 2022).

Therefore, religious moderation serves as a focal point in enhancing religious comprehension and practice, encompassing attitudes such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tafahum* (mutual understanding), *takaful* (mutual support), *tawasul* (mutual synergy), and *tajammu'* (mutual collaboration). Adopting these attitudes positively influences the development and comprehension of competent and effective human resources (Fahrurrozi Dahlan, 2021).). Thus, the promotion of teachings on religious moderation is crucial throughout the archipelago (Ritaudin, 2017). Its teachings are primarily prioritized for building better global welfare and security so that societies have political, economic, and social resilience.

Religious moderation entails a perspective, attitude, and application of religious principles within societal contexts. It involves embodying the core teachings of religion, safeguarding human dignity, fostering public welfare, promoting environmental sustainability based on diverse principles and values, and adhering to the constitution as a foundational state agreement (Khairil Anwar, 2023). Religious moderation means prioritizing balance in terms of beliefs, morals, and character as an expression of the religious attitudes of certain individuals or groups. (A. A. Aziz et al., 2019; Aceng Abdul Aziz et al., 2021).

Based on previous research, there has been no research on the practice of teaching religious moderation among Islamic education lecturers at higher education institutions based on religious organizations with neutral *manhaj* (UIN Mataram), Muhammadiyah (Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram), and Nahdlatul Ulama (UNU Mataram). Therefore, this research is important to reveal best practices in teaching religious moderation among Islamic education lecturers. This study aims to reveal the best practices of Islamic education lecturers in transferring knowledge of religious moderation material with open and inclusive insights. This research also helps to improve the quality of education and good teaching, improve the ability of lecturers to use practical methods and develop globally-minded students to reduce religious conflicts that often occur in various places, including Indonesia.

The researchers selected three Islamic campuses based on their observable commitment to promoting religious moderation through a variety of programs. These universities were chosen for their adequate quality, quantity, and facilities in implementing religious moderation. Furthermore, the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama campuses were specifically chosen due to their reputation for embodying a moderate mainstream that reflects the diversity present in other Islamic campus groups across Indonesia. Consequently, activities and educational materials at these Islamic campuses are expected to be devoid of radical and exclusive content.

The study posits a hypothesis that proposes a positive correlation between the depth of lecturers' understanding of religious moderation and the development of moderate worldviews, attitudes, and religious tolerance among students. This research focuses on how lecturers convey, explain, practice, and teach religious moderation to students from three Islamic campuses. So that the comparison of research results from these three Islamic campuses can be an appropriate reference in developing and strengthening Islamic religious education programs that promote religious moderation, strengthening the competence of Islamic education lecturers in teaching well, helping to create inclusive and integrated learning spaces with better welfare, and developing globally minded students.

Methods

The researchers employed a descriptive-qualitative approach utilizing in-depth interview methods. The study included 10 lecturers holding strategic positions in the field of Islamic religious education from three Islamic universities: Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Nusa Tenggara Barat, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram (UMMAT). The participants were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research focus.

At Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, the interviewees included five Islamic religious lecturers (pseudonyms), interviewed on October 26, 2022. At Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Nusa Tenggara Barat, the participants were three teachers, and the interviews took place on November 30, 2022. Lastly, at Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, the interviewees were two teachers, with interviews conducted on November 2, 2022.

The research spanned a duration of one year or two semesters during the 2021–2022 academic year. Its primary objective was to identify best practices in teaching religious moderation among Islamic education lecturers at universities affiliated with various religious organizations. The study delved into how lecturers impart religious moderation, the attitudes they demonstrate, the challenges encountered in teaching, and the corresponding solutions. It also explored strategic measures, the selection of appropriate strategies and approaches, and the overall effectiveness in effectively conveying moderation to students.

The data collection technique employed in this research involved conducting in-depth interviews using prepared interview guidelines or instruments. These guidelines were designed to guide the interviews, focusing specifically on the teaching practices of religious moderation among Islamic education lecturers. The researchers scheduled appointments with lecturers from the three universities and determined the time and location of the interviews. Prior to data collection, the researchers validated the results of the interviews with the lecturers. During the interviews, the researchers, acting as human instruments, used smartphones to record the discussions after obtaining consent from the interviewees.

The interview guideline for the practice of teaching religious moderation among lecturers consists of four questions, among others: 1) Do you understand the meaning of religious moderation? If yes, please explain. 2) What are your views regarding the understanding of the concept of religious moderation among Islamic education lecturers? 3) What are the challenges and solutions to creating an academic environment that promotes tolerance and respect for different beliefs? 4) What strategies are effectively used in teaching religious moderation to students? The analysis uses data condensation, data display, and data verification.

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Results and Discussion

The results and discussion on the practice of teaching religious moderation among Islamic education lecturers can be observed in the following description:

Understanding the concept of religious moderation among Islamic education lecturers

Erwin Padli posits that religious moderation embodies a religious approach that embraces diversity, inclusivity, and collaboration among various religious communities (WW.1.4. EP, 26-10-2022). This viewpoint is supported by Saparudin's perspective, which characterizes religious moderation as a mindset and religious conduct that strikes a balance by integrating nationalism, tolerance, appreciation for local heritage, and pluralism (WW.1.2. S, 26-10-2022). A fundamental aspect of religious moderation is encapsulated in the concept of wasathiyah, representing a centrist religious outlook that avoids extremes and promotes robust yet tolerant religious convictions, acknowledging and respecting diverse beliefs in a proportional, equitable, and harmonious manner (WW.2.3. M, 30-11-2022). In essence, religious moderation can be understood as a comprehensive perspective, attitude, and application of religion in societal contexts, reflecting the core tenets of religious teachings that safeguard human dignity, foster societal well-being, uphold fairness, and adhere to constitutional principles (WW.1.3. L, 26-10-2022). It embodies a spirit of religious tolerance, mutual preservation, and appreciation of differences (WW.3.1. R, 2-11-22). Individuals' perspectives and behaviors that promote a balanced approach to diversity and differences can cultivate a moderate stance towards religious understanding (WW.2.2. DPN, 30-11-2022). Conversely, Baiq Mulianah defines religious moderation as a concept that conveys messages and impressions related to Islam's principles of rahmatan lil 'alamin, emphasizing compassion and benevolence towards all creation (WW.2.1. BM, 30-11-2022). Therefore, the delineation of religious moderation intertwines with the notions of balanced thinking, conduct, and engagement in societal life, guided by principles of fairness, tolerance, equilibrium, and the promotion of virtuous values for all beings.

Challenges and solutions in creating an academic environment that promotes tolerance and respect for different beliefs.

Creating an academic environment that promotes tolerance and respect for differences in beliefs faces several challenges, as well as proposed solutions. Firstly, there is the enduring influence of a conservative-textual movement, deeply ingrained from early familial upbringing, leading to closed-mindedness and narrow interpretations of differences, thus obstructing moderation (WW.1.2.S., 26-10-2022; WW.1.1. MT, 26-10-2022). To counter this, advocates for religious moderation must be nurtured through expanding student activities across diverse beliefs and cultures, employing theories of assimilation like Koentjaraningrat's, and fostering openness and inclusivity (WW.3.1. R, 2-11-2022). Secondly, a lack of understanding and interaction among religious communities, stemming from differing backgrounds and perspectives, poses a challenge (WW.2.3. M, 30-11-2022; WW.2.2. DPN, 30-11-2022). This can be addressed by

promoting dialogue and interaction between these communities, implementing sustainable religious moderation education, and fostering an open campus environment that encourages diverse viewpoints. Additionally, the rise of cybercrimes such as hate speech, misinformation, and bullying, coupled with low information and digital literacy among students and lecturers, presents significant hurdles (WW.2.1. BM, 30-11-2022). To combat these challenges, strategies include enhancing religious awareness through literacy initiatives, creating ethical digital content, and promoting responsible digital practices in communal living.

Mainstreaming religious moderation with a moderate and integrated narrative pattern with courses and other supporting programs

Muhammad Taisir, the Secretary of the Islamic Religious Education Study Programme (PAI) of FTK UIN Mataram, stated: "Theoretically, religious moderation has been applied in the learning process through relevant supporting courses, such as multicultural education and madhab comparison. However, at the application level, there is still a gap between organizational groups, both among students and lecturers. In general, if the university leaders come from Nahdlatul Ulama or Muhammadiyah organizations, then the subordinate elements are chosen according to their organization. This shows that the placement of positions is not only limited to the element of competence, but the people chosen also to come from the same ideology and are willing to cooperate with similar steps so that the goals will be easily achieved (WW.1.1. MT, 26-10-2022)".

Ahmad Khalakul Khairi emphasized the importance of establishing a shared understanding of religious moderation within the entire academic community to enhance students' comprehension. He highlighted the need to refine the direction and objectives of religious moderation within the curriculum, encompassing not only the learning process but also the values, programs, and cultural initiatives fostered at the Islamic Religious University (WW.1.5. AKH, 26-10-2022).

Saparudin, the Head of the Islamic Education Study Programme at FTK UIN Mataram, said: "Strengthening religious moderation can be done by producing curriculum, teaching resources or materials, culture, and academic policies based on religious moderation and distributing moderate arguments. This academic policy, if implemented properly by lecturers, can prevent acts of intolerance and radicalism. This policy refers to the academic guidelines imposed by universities in realizing the tri-dharma of universities, including education, research, and community service. However, so far, the lecturers have not fully reflected on empirical experiences, so in internalizing moderate values, they do not appear specifically. Therefore, religious moderation needs to be conveyed through good interactions from various academic activities, scientific discussion forums, and other student activities (WW.1.2. S, 26-10-2022)."

The above opinion is in line with Abdul Syatar's research, which says that strengthening religious moderation is done by integrating it into the tri-dharma of higher education (Syatar, 2020).

Lubna, as the dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Keguruan UIN Mataram, stated: "Religious moderation has been applied in the learning process, which is integrated with the subjects. In addition, the mainstreaming of religious moderation at UIN Mataram has been implemented through scientific discussion forums, public lectures (stadium general), student activities, research, scientific publications, and community service, so that it has an impact on the perspective and attitude of students who are moderate, tolerant, and mutually accepting and respecting each other's diversity, such as women who wear hijab (*cadar*) and non-hijab, and good social relations patterns in terms of interactions between students, lecturers, and academicians without distinguishing gender and religious affiliation (WW.1.3. L, 26-10-2022)". Based on the field observations, UIN Mataram has provided religious moderation laboratory facilities for lecturers and students to provide examples and practice directly with various props so that they can strengthen religious moderation and Islamic aqidah.

Dewi Puspita Ningsih, a lecturer at UNU NTB, stated that there is no specific material that discusses religious moderation, but in general, it has been implemented in the form of Aswaja and Islamic Religious Education courses. Although religious moderation has not been implemented in the study program curriculum, in practice, students already understand Islamic values as outlined in the Aswaja course (WW.2.2. DPN, 30-11-2022).

Rukimin, as a lecturer at the University of Muhammadiyah Mataram (UMMAT), stated that religious moderation has been applied in the learning process, especially in the Baitul Arqom activity program whose contents include aqidah, ibadah, akhlak, and Kemuhammadiyahan. Baitul Arqam is a medium for da'wah and the regeneration of students at this university. The Baitul Arqam certificate serves as a requirement to be able to participate in PPL, KKN, Yudisium, and WISUDA, as well as other needs if needed. At Muhammadiyah Mataram University, there is also the Institute for the Study, Practice, and Development of Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan (LP3IK), which greatly supports the direction of student religious moderation. Students are equipped with various experiences and practices from these various activities so that they can respect each other. In general, religious moderation in students is evaluated by direct practice (WW.3.1. R, 2-11-22). Adiman Fariyadin added that religious moderation is evaluated through field studies because, at the theoretical level, the material presented is still limited, especially outside the faculty of Islamic religion, and the narrative of religious moderation is only inserted in other related subjects (WW.3.2. R, 2-11-22).

The arguments of Lubna, Dewi Puspita Ningsih, and Rukimin above are the results of research by Abdul Sahib et al. that IAIN Curup lecturers build the concept of religious moderation through the insertion of certain courses, workshops, research, and Real Work Lectures (KKN) based on religious moderation (Sahib et al., 2022). The research results of Ahmad Sodikin and Muhammad Anas Ma'arif also support the above opinion that Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama universities have developed moderate Islamic values according to their *manhaj* and aqidah (Sodikin & Ma`arif, 2021).

Some of the informants' opinions above also show that the practice of teaching religious moderation among Islamic religious education lecturers needs to combine learning with UNESCO's vision of education, which is not only to know, to do, and to be,

but also to live together. This means that the learning process of religious moderation must be able to make students have an understanding and religious behavior that runs parallel to their ability to live with other people who are different ethnically, culturally, and religiously. To implement religious moderation in a multicultural society, educational institutions need to become a laboratory base for religious moderation through socio-religious approaches in religion and the state, theological and philosophical approaches (Salim, 2022), developing religious literacy, and multiplying the practice of different religious experiences to establish cooperation between religious believers (Sutrisno, 2019). In Christian religious education, there is the idea of "theology religion," which is a movement to build bridges of dialogue between religious communities (Jura, 2018).

Learning with a transformative-moderative model (objective-academic)

In practice, religious moderation taught in three Islamic universities under study is taught as a hidden curriculum and learning with a transformative-moderative model (objective-academic). This is in line with Chadidjah et al.'s research, which reveals that apart from being a hidden curriculum, the lecturers do not pay much attention to the value of religious moderation in higher education because students are considered adults who can determine their attitudes towards (Chadidjah et al., 2021). However, a person's religious understanding sometimes becomes a source of problems, even a source of conflict, when dealing with other people's religions and beliefs, triggering acts of violence and radicalism.

Fischman and Gardner echoed this finding in their five-year study, which found that 45% of students have a transactional attitude about college and 36% of students have an exploratory attitude, where they deliberately take the time to learn new fields and activities. However, only 16 percent of students have a transformative mental model, which leads them to reflect on and question their beliefs and values.

The term transformative is part of the Islamic education method. The essence of transformative thinking is how to change the mindset from just taking a point of view for granted when looking at texts and reality to one that is more reflective, critical, and open to change. When learning is done with this transformative-moderative model, it can allow the production of individuals who are reflective and open to change in reading, understanding, interpreting, and applying Islamic teachings (Nuryatno, 2011).

The transformative-moderative model is an alternative path that emerged as a criticism of the idea of modernization (developmentalism), which is considered to have failed to overcome social inequality and social injustice, so this model is oriented towards transforming an unfair environment into a more. The basic reasons for learning with this transformative-moderative model include 1) the poverty of religion as a rationalization of life; 2) the poverty of religious institutions, such as the lack of effectiveness of *majlis taklim*; and 3) poverty in the field of socio-economic institutions. Therefore, this model moves to adjust the structural and cultural basis of society.

The transformative-moderative model, grounded in an objective-academic framework, aims to enable educators to impart religious teachings to students through a

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methodical, systematic, and reliable approach. This model emphasizes the cultivation of critical thinking skills and rationality, serving as a middle ground to foster spiritual and intellectual awareness tailored to students' unique circumstances, capabilities, and requirements arising from diverse living environments.

Fahrurrozi stated that the characteristics inherent in the transformative-moderative model are: contextual (according to the context of time and place), tolerant, respectful of tradition (tradition becomes a means of vitalizing Islamic values), progressive (accepting and responding to existing teachings and realities to be developed intensely and creatively), and liberating (answering the problems of community life universally with the content of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* values) (Fahrurrozi, 2019). In transformative-moderative model learning, we follow the procedures, methods, and strategies of the Prophets as role models (uswah) because education from the Prophets has Maziya (systematicity) and special characteristics that ordinary humans do not have. The privileges and special characteristics are: 1) has great qualities, including: *siddiq* (honest), *amanah* (trustworthy), *tabligh* (conveying), *fathonah* (intelligent, clever), salamah minal uyub al munaffiroh (safe from defects or diseases that cause the ummah to be reluctant and run away), and ismah (guarded from sin and evil); 2) has distinctive characteristics, namely: *Robbaniyah* or based on revelation and *taklif* (burden) from Allah SWT, not demanding wages, purifying religion and specializing worship for Allah alone, simple, not heavy and not complicated, clear goals and objectives, prioritizing the hereafter rather than the world (*zuhud*), and emphasizing matters of aqidah (*mughoyyabat*); 3) the rank of the prophet has the highest rank; 4) is dedicated to the priority of great interests, namely: introducing creatures to their kholiq, conveying His commands and prohibitions, guiding to the straight path, being *uswah hasanah* for humans, warning about the resurrection day, and showing the nature of life in the world and the hereafter so that they are always motivated to worship (Muhammad Ihya 'Ulumuddin, 2011).

Learning with this transformative-moderative model is based on theological-normative and phenomenological foundations. The theological-normative foundation is a foundation based on the Qur'an and Hadith, which explains the obligation to seek knowledge for every Muslim and practice it both as educators and leaders. Theologically, teaching is a sacred duty of Muslims, which is part of worship. This is related to the duties and functions of the creation of humans, namely *Khalifah fi al-ardh,* as found in the Qur'an (Al-Baqarah/1: 30). The foundation is actualized by lecturers as educators in the empirical realm to answer the complexity of the problem phenomena in the field. This is what is called a phenomenological foundation, which is the factual basis of empirical events in the field, which is a fundamental need for the continuation of peaceful and tolerant human life.

Utilization of Social Media

Social media is an open public sphere that displays information widely and deeply without space or time constraints. Information and religious moderation message transmission activities in the digital space are significant, since the majority of

Indonesians are active internet users. We Are Social noted that by January 2020, active internet users in the world reached 4.5 billion people, with 3.8 billion active social media users. Meanwhile, in Indonesia alone, out of a total population of 272 million in 2020, the penetration of active internet users reached 175 million and active social media users as many as 160 million (We Are Social, 2020). Of this total, the use of social media is dominated by the younger generation, aged between 16-30 years (Fakhruroji et al., 2020).

Nuruzzaman added that social media content with terror nuances occupies 0.6%, moderate content 17%, radical content 40%, and intolerance content 43%. Erma Haryani's research shows that acts of religious violence committed by children are motivated by radical teachings read on the internet (Haryani, 2020). This finding encourages lecturers to actively counter narratives related to radical and intolerant content on social media.

Islamic religious education lecturers in three universities under study utilize social media as a communication and learning tool to spread knowledge and moderate messages to the wider community, especially to students in the online learning process. The lecturers use social media massively and synergistically through Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Some forms of mainstream religious moderation carried out by lecturers are writing moderation expressions through words of wisdom uploaded through Facebook and Instagram, and delivering moderate narratives through YouTube videos. The use of social media by lecturers is ideologically oriented in the form of symbolic interaction or Mead's thinking, which is considered capable of dealing with social problems in society, such as changes in behavior, attitudes, and views of the community. This is in line with Akmaliah's research that religious messages delivered through social media are more quickly noticed by the wider community (Akmaliah, 2020).

In the digital age, lecturers need to utilize social media platforms to convey the message of religious moderation effectively. This approach is crucial as students have easy access to online information, including radical content. Given that students are often targeted for potential radicalization in Indonesia, narrating religious moderation through social media channels becomes imperative to counteract radical influences and promote a balanced understanding of religious teachings.

The above finding is in line with the results of Wildani Hefni's research, which found that Islamic religious universities that act as peace laboratories need to strengthen religious moderation content through digital space as a counterweight to the strong flow of information on social media to foster moderate and tolerant religious framing (Hefni, 2020). Virtual communication through social media platforms needs to be built with moderate content to counteract fake news, hate speech, and cyberbullying that can harm and affect one's mental health. For this reason, artificial intelligence (AI) plays an important role in accurately detecting information and moderating content that develops on social media (Gongane et al., 2022).

The aforementioned description highlights the importance of educators establishing a symbiotic relationship between education and technology. A study conducted by the Gallup company reveals that over 81% of teachers acknowledge significant benefits in

utilizing digital learning tools within the classroom. Moreover, 57% of teachers believe that digital learning tools are more effective in delivering instructions and engaging students with school lessons. Notably, nearly 90% of the current student generation has grown up during a period of rapid technological development (Nur, 2020; Calderon, 2019).

Religious moderation content delivered by lecturers in social media production settings can serve as an alternative for the younger generation to enhance their understanding of Islamic teachings, offering values, narratives, and behaviors associated with religious moderation. Observations of visual communication on the YouTube social media platform by scholars such as Buya Yahya, Gus Baha, and Ulil Abshar Abdalla have showcased informative, innovative, and recreative constructions of religious content. Additionally, the unique innovation of presenting the Sorogan tradition as a method of *da'wah* through digital space on social media is highlighted, with ideological packaging involving the convergence of text engineering in the form of statuses, memes, symbols, graphics, and more, constructing a religious language that intertwines narratives, symbols, and images (Nasrullah & Rustandi, 2016:120). Virtual social relations are established across three primary levels: the individual level, interactions between individuals, and interactions among groups (Dudy Imanuddin Effendi et al., 2022:ii).

Based on the description above, the following are the basic similarities and differences from the findings in the field, see table1.

Table 1. Findings of religious moderation teaching among Islamic education lecturers on three universities

Institution	Similarities	Differences	The concept of religious moderation	Challenge
Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram	Lecturers integrate religious moderation in their teaching and learning process.	The practice of teaching religious moderation has been integrated with all courses, but there is no particular course on religious moderation.	Religious moderation is the perspective, attitude, and practice of religion in collective life by manifesting the essence of religious teachings that protect human dignity, build public benefits, are just, and obey the Constitution.	The strength of the conservative-textual movement
		Establishing a Rumah Moderasi Beragama (RMB) as a hub for religious moderation activities, studies, and discussion forums is merely a formal step, as the activities associated with it have not been consistently conducted.	Religious moderation is an understanding and behavior of religion that takes the middle way by synergizing nationalism, tolerance, respect for local treasures, and diversity.	Students tend not to easily accept differences.
Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama	Concrete initiatives to	In general, the practice of teaching religious moderation	Religious moderation is a	Lack of understanding

Institution	Similarities	Differences	The concept of religious moderation	Challenge
(UNU) Nusa Tenggara Barat	integrate religious moderation into campus culture have not been extensively implemented due to its absence from the Ortaker and Statuta of Higher Education, leading to a lack of systematic inclusion in the curriculum. Furthermore, insufficient funds and resources contribute to the challenges in supporting activity programs centered around religious moderation.	is included in certain courses, such as Aswaja and Islamic education.	concept that conveys messages and impressions related to Islam *rahmatan lil 'alamiin*	and interaction between religious communities, both lecturers and students
Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram		Moderation learning is applied to specialized learning in the Baitul Arqam program. At the Lembaga Pengkajian Pengamalan Pengembangan Islam dan Kemuhamadiyahan (LP3IK), actual issues such as religious moderation are studied. Inserted only in related subjects	Religious moderation is essentially tolerance of religion, maintaining and caring for differences.	Students tend to think narrowly when interpreting differences.

Conclusion

The teaching of religious moderation among lecturers takes various approaches. Some integrate moderation across all courses, others select specific courses, and a few focus solely on related subjects. This diversity reflects different lecturers' methods of imparting moderation. Islamic education lecturers use diverse teaching methods to instill religious moderation in students. They integrate moderation into various courses through verbal, written, and practical means using transformative-moderative models within an objective-academic framework. Additionally, lecturers use social media platforms and supporting programs grounded in systemic-integrative and spiritual approaches to reinforce the teaching of religious moderation.

Research findings emphasize the importance of consistently and structurally managing religious moderation in higher education. This includes fostering shared understanding among stakeholders, implementing structured frameworks, and allocating sufficient resources to effectively implement programs. Such an approach optimizes the delivery and impact of religious moderation initiatives within institutions. The findings align with previous research by Benny Afwadzi, Umi Sumbulah, and others.

The research also provides recommendations for educators and policymakers to strengthen religious moderation in Islamic education institutions. These include developing a curriculum that promotes moderation and tolerance, providing training for lecturers, and formulating inclusive, moderation-oriented policies at the national level. UIN, UNU, and UMMAT can adopt global, *manhaj*-based, and integrated approaches, respectively, to ensure widespread acceptance and practice of moderation.

The study's implications encourage lecturers to design lesson plans and restructure the learning process around religious moderation. Lecturers should use character-based

cognitive, dialogical, reflective, comprehensive, and cross-cultural approaches to maximize the teaching of moderation. However, the study's limitations include not including all universities based on other religious organizations and public universities under Kemenristekdikti. Further research using different Islamic campus and public university locations could provide more balanced data.

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