

## LEARNING MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A CASE STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY

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### Abstract:

In the digital era, university students are increasingly exposed to radicalism and extremism through social media platforms, posing a significant challenge to national and global efforts to promote moderate religious values. This research aims to reveal the paradigm and the implementation of learning management for religious moderation at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS) in the digital era. The method used in this research is qualitative with a case study approach. Data sources were obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation, while data analysis techniques include data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. The results of this study indicate that the learning management of religious moderation at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta is built on the paradigms of inclusiveness, progressiveness, and tolerance. These concepts are implemented through the management curriculum and the strategy of teaching. The study contributes to theoretical and practical discussions on managing religious education in universities, emphasizing the importance of adapting to digital transformations while promoting moderate religious values.

### Abstrak

Di era digital, mahasiswa semakin terpapar radikalisme dan ekstremisme melalui platform media sosial, yang menimbulkan tantangan signifikan bagi upaya nasional dan global untuk mempromosikan nilai-nilai keagamaan yang moderat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap paradigma dan implementasi manajemen pembelajaran untuk moderasi beragama di Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) di era digital. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Sumber data diperoleh dari wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, sedangkan teknik analisis data meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa manajemen pembelajaran moderasi beragama di Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta dibangun di atas paradigma inklusivitas, progresivitas, dan toleransi. Konsep-konsep ini diimplementasikan melalui kurikulum manajemen dan strategi pengajaran. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada diskusi teoritis dan praktis tentang pengelolaan pendidikan agama di universitas, dengan menekankan pentingnya beradaptasi dengan transformasi digital sambil mempromosikan nilai-nilai keagamaan yang moderat.

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## INTRODUCTION

The issue of religious radicalism in higher education has received significant attention, particularly in Indonesia, where students are increasingly exposed to extremist ideologies through digital platforms.(Quassim Cassam, 2024) However, while various preventive measures such as curriculum integration, religious moderation policies, and interreligious literacy learning have been implemented, there remains a gap in understanding how these approaches effectively address the challenges posed by the digital era. (Sharma, Karunika, & Tewari, 2023) (Burhanuddin & Khairuddin, 2022) Many higher education institutions still struggle to incorporate moderate religious education that aligns with contemporary challenges, particularly the rapid spread of radical ideologies on social media. (Sirry, 2020)

In this era of rapid scientific and technological advancement, it is difficult to project what role the Muslim community can tangibly play without various approaches being explored and attempted. (Stavropoulos, 2021) However, it is undeniable that the advancement of science and technology has influenced the current development of the Muslim community.(Mehfooz & Syed, 2020) To what extent this technology influences Muslims, or whether Muslims can reverse the trend and influence the development of science and technology as they did during the golden age of Islam, remains an open question. (Sheikh Khairudin, 2021)

The digital era offers significant opportunities for cultural assimilation, the universality of ethical values, as well as the rapid development and dissemination of knowledge due to the massive transfer of knowledge. (Håkansson Lindqvist, 2024) This digitalization development also makes the inevitability of globalization and its influence unavoidable.(W. Zhang, Zhang, & Deng, 2025) This development presents challenges, crises, and threats to the sustainability of social life. Among the serious challenges currently faced by the nation is radical and extreme religious thought. This type of thinking is very dangerous because it can lead to acts of terrorism. (Sapaev, 2024)

As an effort to prevent and combat extremism, radicalism, and terrorism, the state strives to instill a moderate religious attitude. (Ferro, Cavalini, Goveia, & Malini, 2025) The government implements various programs, one of which is using higher education institutions as a platform to promote religious moderation. (Schmidt, 2021) Government policies must be supported by all stakeholders in educational institutions so that moderate learning is realized.(Wahyudin, Furqon, Prabowo, & Zawawi, 2024) Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta is committed to fulfilling this mandate through the Baitul Arqom program. This program is mandatory for all students as one of the compulsory courses they must complete. To achieve the goals of moderation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta need a good management of learning and curriculum.

Fundamentally, there have been many studies on religious moderation, first, Religious Moderation in Indonesian Muslims, written by Imam Subchi and

colleagues. The findings of this research indicate that religiosity has a positive influence on religious moderation. This means that religious intellectuality, ideology, and public practices support individuals in expressing a moderate stance in religion and can help prevent intolerance and radicalism. (Subchi, Zulkifli, Latifa, & Sa'diyah, 2022)

Second, Cultural Analysis of the Concepts of Moderation, Tolerance, and Social Peace in Central Texts across Arab, Western, and Chinese Cultures. This research highlights how these values are embedded in texts and practices central to these cultures, offering a comparative analysis that underscores shared values and unique cultural expressions. (Alkhazaleh, Qiqieh, & Abdelhadi, 2025)

Third, Religious Moderation in Indonesian Higher Education: Literature Review, written by Afwadzi. B and Miski. The findings of the study indicate that religious moderation is carried out both formally in academic settings and informally, according to the specific situations and conditions within each university environment. Furthermore, recent studies show that several counter-radicalism strategies through moderation, implemented in various higher education institutions, appear to be relevant within the context of higher education. (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021)

These studies focus on concepts of religious moderation education, but have not discussed its implementation, especially the level of learning management and curriculum. This research will specifically discuss the appropriate management of learning and curriculum for religious moderation in the digital era at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. This research will contribute to determining the right management approach to religious moderation learning and its implementation in the curriculum and teaching strategies.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to analyze the concept and implementation of religious moderation in the Baitul Arqom UMS program in the digital era. The data sources include observations, in-depth and unstructured interviews, and documentation. (Segura, L. C., 2025; Tharaba & Wahyudin, 2024)

Observations are conducted by actively participating in the learning process of Islamic studies at UMS. This research uses a purposive sampling technique, namely selecting informants or cases who have knowledge or experience relevant to the research focus (Johnny Saldana & Michael Huberman, 2014). The informants in this study are the stakeholders of Baitul Arqom UMS who truly understand the concept of religious moderation, material development, learning strategies, vision, mission, objectives, materials, and evaluation of this program. This research involved 6 informants, namely the head of the Islamic and Muhammadiyah study institute at UMS, the head of the Baitul Arqom program division, and four lecturers. Documentation related to religious studies, such as semester learning plans and teaching materials, and the website of the Baitul Arqom program.

Data analysis techniques in religious moderation research at UMS in the digital era refer to Cresswel's theory, which includes data condensation, data display, verification, and concluding. (Creswell, 2014)

**Table. 1.1** Data Analysis Techniques

Theme	Theme Data Data source	Data source
<b>Moderation Paradigm</b>	The main pillar in developing moderation	Interview with the head of the division, lecturers, and documentation from the website
<b>Curriculum/Learning Materials</b>	Comprehensive material from various opinions of different Islamic scholars or ulama and mazhab	Observation, documentation of teaching module and lesson plans,
<b>Learning Strategy</b>	Strategies or techniques used in the learning process	Observation, Interview with the lecturers, syllabus

Based on the table above, the data analysis technique was carried out by collecting data directly from informants relevant to the research focus, namely the management of religious moderation learning in the digital era. After the data was collected, condensation was performed by filtering information from interviews and documentation, eliminating data that did not align with the theme, and grouping it based on the theory in the literature review. Data presentation was done to provide an overview of the relationships between variables through narratives, charts, or other forms that facilitate understanding.

To increase data credibility, source triangulation was carried out, where data obtained from interviews with key informants would be compared with documents and direct observations in learning activities.(Creswell & Guetterman, 2024)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Background of religious moderation education at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS) believes it is critical to build an Islamic studies curriculum based on religious moderation. This is driven by a number of ideological issues that have evolved in the digital era, including radicalism and liberalism. Radicalism has recently become a more pressing issue for the state to confront because it has spread to numerous countries and has had fatal consequences for national security.(Arifin, Nabila, Rahmi, & Atika, 2025)

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ideological issues that have evolved in the digital era, including radicalism and liberalism. Radicalism has recently become a more pressing issue for the state to confront because it has spread to numerous countries and has had fatal bad consequences for national security.(Mustapa, et al, 2025)

The digital era has diminished the authority of the government and the paradigms of religion, making it difficult to fully control the thoughts of society. Individuals can quickly and easily access information and knowledge through search engines or social media. (Zhu & Fu, 2024) In reality, the number of non-religious people in many countries is not decreasing; rather, atheism is rapidly growing worldwide. (Duile & Aldama, 2024) Communist and liberal countries, often associated with atheism, display hedonistic lifestyles and legalize practices that religions prohibit.(Joshnloo, 2021) In Saudi Arabia, it is estimated that 5% of the population identifies as atheists or opposes divine ideas. (Al Hariri, Magdy, & Wolters, 2021), a percentage comparable to the number of atheists in the United States. (Brown, 2022) The rise of atheism in Middle Eastern countries is fueled by radical actions, extremism, and terrorism that claim to be religious. (van Nieuwkerk, 2021)

A significant challenge for Muslims, especially in Indonesia, is the proliferation of transnational ideologies, namely radicalism and liberalism. These two challenges have strengthened in the digital era because such ideologies are easily disseminated and accessed by Muslims. (Burton, 2023) These thoughts spread across various digital platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, websites, and online studies through specific religious teachers. These ideologies hold particular youth appeal, offering a different paradigm of being Muslim. (Wolfowicz, Perry, Hasisi, & Weisburd, 2021) The Pancasila ideology, closely tied to Islamic values, is increasingly neglected, leading to conflict against the state in the name of religion. (Rachman, Putro, Rusandi, & Situmorang, 2024)

The government is currently paying more attention to the radical ideologies that pose an urgent threat to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.(Lakbayev, Nurgaliyev, Khanov, Bashirov, & Smatlayev, 2025) Radicalism in Indonesia develops due to three main factors. First, radical groups use the situation in the Middle East as inspiration to take up arms and commit terrorist acts based on the suffering of fellow Muslims. The conditions in Afghanistan, the occupation of Palestine by Zionists, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and so on are seen as interventions involving cooperation between the United States and Israel, supported by their allies. Second, the spread of Wahhabism, which glorifies conservative Arab Islamic culture, has contributed to this issue. This group readily labels those outside their circle with differing attitudes, views, and thoughts as infidels, enemies, and legitimate targets for conflict. Third, the factors of poverty or social justice play a role. While this condition does not directly influence the rise of radicalism, the feeling of being marginalized is a key element that likely creates a strong connection between existing poverty and latent radicalism. (Khammami, 2002)

Islamic religious education that has been infiltrated by radical ideologies needs to undergo reorientation towards a direction that aligns with the spirit of Islam, which teaches mutual respect and brotherhood. (Sponholz & Meuth, 2025) The planning of an Islamic education concept should balance the application of the principle of *Hablum minallah-hablum minannas* (relationship with God and with fellow humans), promoting tolerance, inclusivity, humanism, and multiculturalism. (R'boul, 2021) This education must emphasize love for all of God's creations, respect for others, politeness, and social harmony. It should begin from basic education so that, in the future, it can foster the realization of harmony within the state. (Sulaiman, 2021)

As an Islamic-based private university, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) must contribute to developing and instilling moderate religious values. Through a moderate understanding of religion, UMS hopes that its students will become religious leaders and pioneers of tolerance in their respective regions. One of UMS's goals is to produce graduates who excel in their fields of expertise, have a comprehensive understanding of religion, and contribute positively to society. ("<https://lppik.ums.ac.id/visi-dan-misi/>," n.d.)

To achieve these graduation standards, UMS implements a religious mastery program through Islamic and Muhammadiyah studies courses, often abbreviated as AIK (*Al-Islam dan Kemuhammadiyahan*). UMS hopes that through these courses, students will develop an inclusive understanding of religion, remain open to various differing religious viewpoints, and accept inputs from diverse paradigms as long as they do not conflict with Islamic principles. ("<https://lppik.ums.ac.id/visi-dan-misi/>," n.d.)

In response to the digital era, UMS recognizes the importance of adapting quickly to ensure its graduates do not adopt extreme or exclusive religious views. The open access to information in this disruptive era allows the millennial generation to easily access religious information or content. As a result, they can readily consume any religious content, including extreme material, without proper filtering or discussion with traditional religious authorities. Consequently, some millennials' religious thinking may tend toward extremism.

The concept of moderation developed by Baitul Arqom at UMS is grounded in verses from the Qur'an, which guide the institution's efforts to foster balanced, tolerant, and peaceful approaches to religion.

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

"And thus We have made you [Muslims] a just and balanced nation (*ummah wasathiyah*) that you will be witnesses over the people." (QS Al-Baqarah: 143).

The word "wasatho" in the verse above is interpreted as a moderate path, meaning it supports the middle way a position that neither leans toward extremism in understanding and practicing religion, nor is too lenient to the point of abandoning religious principles. The characteristics of moderation include; *Tawazun* (Balance) or maintaining equilibrium without leaning toward any



extreme interpretation of religious teachings. Tasamuh (Tolerance) or accepting differences and respecting the beliefs of others. I'tidal (Justice) or acting with fairness in all aspects, whether in thought or action. This educational model aims to foster an understanding of Islam that promotes harmony, mutual respect, and constructive dialogue among different groups, both within and outside the university. (Muhammad Faisal Hamdani, 2022)

Based on the challenges of extremism and terrorism in Indonesia, religious moderation education at UMS is implemented through three stages, namely building a paradigm, compiling a curriculum of learning materials, and determining learning strategies.

### **The Paradigm of Religious Moderation Learning at Baitul Arqom Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta**

The concept of moderation developed by Baitul Arqom at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta is grounded in verses from the Qur'an, which guide the institution's efforts to foster balanced, tolerant, and peaceful approaches to religion.

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*"And thus We have made you [Muslims] a just and balanced nation (ummah wasathiyah) that you will be witnesses over the people."* (QS Al-Baqarah: 143).

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta builds three paradigms, namely inclusivism, tolerance, and progressivism. Islam has a clear concept of inclusivism, both in relation to fellow Muslims and to other religions. Inclusivism among Muslims has been exemplified by the companions and earlier scholars. One example of differing opinions among the companions is Umar bin Khattab's proposal to Caliph Abu Bakr to compile the Qur'an. Although Abu Bakr initially disagreed, he eventually accepted Umar's proposal after considering its pros and cons. This shows Abu Bakr's inclusiveness towards others' views. (Saffari, 2023)

A similar example was demonstrated by earlier scholars, such as Imam Ghazali, who unified the religious views of scholars of fiqh and scholars of tasawwuf, which often conflicted. Imam Ghazali's inclusive thinking produced extraordinary ideas, leading later scholars to give him the title Hujjatul Islam (the proof of Islam). (Prastowo & Daraini, 2024)

This spirit of inclusive thinking must be preserved and developed, especially in response to the emergence of various contemporary scholars' views, Islamic organizations with different fiqh concepts, and the ongoing changes in social conditions. The Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan institution at UMS believes that these differences will enrich knowledge and offer various religious solutions from multiple perspectives. Such differences provide ease for Muslims to choose opinions that are not burdensome and suit their individual circumstances.

The next paradigm is tolerant. Tolerance in this sense means allowing people of other religions to have their own attitudes or behaviors, especially when faced with different realities. The Qur'an extensively discusses tolerance. For example, in

the Qur'an, Allah explains that tolerance is part of the brotherhood that is a core teaching in Islam, as written in Surah Yunus, verses 40 and 41:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ (40) وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيئُونَ مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (41)

*Among them are those who believe in the Qur'an, and among them are those who do not believe in it. And your Lord knows best about the corrupters. If they deny you, then say: 'For me is my work, and for you is your work. You are free from what I do, and I am free from what you do. (Surah Yunus: 40-41).*

The last paradigm is progressivism. The concept of tajdid or religious progressivism in Muhammadiyah covers two aspects: aqidah (creed) and ibadah (worship), as well as worldly muamalah (social dealings). Progressivism in aqidah and ibadah refers to the purification of these practices from polytheism and rituals that are not authoritative or do not conform to the Qur'an and Hadith. In the realm of worldly muamalah, it means the dynamic adaptation of religious teachings to be relevant to modern times and to offer solutions to various social issues. (Saeed & Akbar A., 2021)

The inclusive, tolerant, and progressive paradigm has a very important role in forming a moderate mindset among students, especially in the context of religious education. (Rahmat & Yahya, 2022) This approach emphasizes the values of openness and acceptance of differences, both in terms of religious and cultural views. (Demmrich, Ağilkaya-Şahin, & Şenel, 2024) In an increasingly pluralistic and digitally connected world, students need to be equipped with the ability to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives, without getting caught up in narrow or extreme thinking. (Polat & Özen, 2024) By integrating an inclusive paradigm, students are taught to not only accept differences, but also to appreciate them as part of a diversity that enriches social and religious life. This is particularly relevant in facing the challenges of globalization which often brings sharp ideological polarity. (Green, 2023)

In addition, the tolerant and progressive paradigm also strengthens the formation of a moderate mindset by encouraging students to think critically and be open to the development of the times. (Ivory & Jandrić, 2024) In the educational process that prioritizes this principle, students are not only trained to follow religious teachings dogmatically, but also to respond to contemporary problems with a wise and adaptive attitude. Learning based on the development of a progressive mindset helps students to reject stagnant thinking, opens their horizons to innovation, and teaches them to interact with the outside world constructively. (Tirri, 2021) Thus, this paradigm equips students with a strong foundation to become moderate person, value diversity, and be able to contribute positively in an increasingly complex global society.

To support the internalization of this paradigm, it is necessary to manage a supportive educational environment, such as accommodating various scientific



perspectives and providing an open discussion space for lecturers and students. (Nasir, Sudarmoko, Supriyatno, & Widodo, 2025) These paradigms above must be developed in the form of learning curriculum or materials and teaching strategies.

### **The Management Learning Curriculum of Religious Moderation in the Digital Era**

The implementation of religious moderation through the curriculum of that material can be seen in the main reference book for the Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah course. The explanation can be seen in the following table.

**Table. 1.2** The Documentation of Lesson Materials at Baitul Arqom UMS (Tim Penyusun, 2020)

<b>Number</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1</b>	Aqidah	This course serves as the foundation of Islamic practice and knowledge development. Students are encouraged to analyze the definition, scope, and urgency of aqidah in daily life.
<b>2</b>	Tauhid	Tauhid is a continuation of the aqidah material. It forms the basis of aqidah, sharia, and ethics. Students are expected to practice tauhid correctly, free from shirk (polytheism), and use it as a foundation for all actions.
<b>3</b>	Divisions of Tauhid	This subject elaborates on tauhid. Students are invited to further analyze tauhid, including scholars' opinions on its divisions: Rububiyah, Asma wa Sifat, and Uluhiyyah.
<b>4</b>	Articles of Faith/Rukun Iman	This course is an explanation of tauhid, whereby belief in Allah is followed by belief in His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine destiny.
<b>5</b>	Branches and Benefits of Faith/Iman	Students will learn about the different branches of faith and analyze the essential and auxiliary aspects of faith.
<b>6</b>	Things that Destroy Faith/Iman	This subject discusses actions that corrupt or nullify faith. Students are expected to analyze shirk, kufr (disbelief), nifaq (hypocrisy), riddah (apostasy), bid'ah (innovation), witchcraft, and divination.
<b>7</b>	Akhlak	This course is an implementation of faith, as faith is reflected in daily life. Students will discuss the concept and characteristics of ethics.
<b>8</b>	The Scoops of Akhlak/Ethic	Students will analyze the importance of maintaining good relationships with God, fellow humans, and even the environment.

Based on the table above, generally, the curriculum of learning consists of Aqidah and Morals. Aqidah addresses a person's belief in God, and fundamentally, every religion has aqidah, as all believe in their respective deities. The difference

lies in who is worshipped in each religion, whether they have the same deity, and if the concept of divinity is similar, among other things. This is the focus of study at Baitul Arqom UMS, enabling students to analyze the differences in aqidah between Islam and other religions.

The subject of tauhid is crucial in religious life, especially in Islam. It encourages students to be aware that embracing Islam begins with tauhid or the oneness of Allah. Being a Muslim means submitting oneself to recognize Allah's divinity, which leads to obeying Him to achieve happiness in this world and the Hereafter. (Wilkinson, 2021)

This concept contrasts with the one developed by Western scholars, who argue that achieving happiness in the afterlife or paradise is only based on doing good deeds in this world, and that acknowledging Allah is not the only condition for entering paradise. Since Allah is just, those who do good will receive rewards both in this world and the hereafter. (El-Bassiouny & Hisham El-Naggar, 2025)

The subject of tauhid should be analyzed in greater depth so that students can apply it in their lives. Tauhid is divided into three parts: Tauhid Rububiyyah, Tauhid Asma wa Sifat, and Tauhid Uluhiyyah. This division of tauhid is believed to make it easier for students to implement it in their daily lives. (Akin, 2023) Tauhid Rububiyyah relates to the belief that everything in the universe is Allah's creation, and it is Allah who maintains, protects, and preserves it. (Suri & Tanjung, 2025) This concept helps students understand that everything that happens in nature is under Allah's control. Students will realize that as they delve deeper into knowledge, their faith in Allah strengthens, as they recognize the vastness of His power. The ultimate purpose of developing knowledge and technology is to strengthen faith in Allah. (Ali, 2025)

Tauhid Rububiyyah must be supported by Tauhid Asma wa Sifat, which is the recognition of Allah through His names and attributes. Students should understand that through His names and attributes, all creatures are sustained in this world, even non-believers, and therefore, there is no reason to hate them. This tauhid is completed with Tauhid Uluhiyyah, which is worshipping Allah without associating partners with Him. (Badron, 2023)

These concepts of tauhid are further developed in the articles of faith, with the consequence of believing in Allah being belief in His angels, books, messengers, the Last Day, and His divine decrees. This concept serves as the foundation for developing behavior and knowledge, making tauhid the driving force behind all human activity. (Tarar & Hasan, 2020)

The subjects on faith are complemented by the study of ethics (akhlaq), which covers how a Muslim should interact with God, fellow Muslims and non-Muslims, and even the natural environment. There is a close relationship between faith and ethics, as faith must be reflected in one's behavior, and ethics must be based on the values of tauhid. (Nabi, Fayaz, Kamal, & Shah, 2024)

The course materials at Baitul Arqom encourage students to understand that the foundation of their conduct is tauhid, or the oneness of Allah, ensuring that

their actions do not violate Allah's commands. In the context of religious moderation education, tauhid serves as both an inspiration for developing a moderate attitude and a boundary for interacting with other religions. An inclusive tauhid worldview will build students' mindsets to open up space for dialogue with all humans, across ethnicities, races and religions, as explained in the letter Al-Hujurat verse 13.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (13)

*O people, indeed, we have created you from a man and a woman. Then, we made you into nations and tribes so that you might know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious one. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Compliant.*

Based on Al-Hujurat, the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims should be maintained through worldly activities, such as helping one another, collaborating in nation-building, developing the economy, constructing educational and health care facilities, and so on.(Mernissi, 2023) So, moderation must not deviate from the concept of tauhid, such as participating in religious practices or prayers of other religions in their places of worship.

The Tauhid paradigm concept will be the worldview for interacting in the digital era with the rapid flow of information from various perspectives. The Western perspective that tends to be secular and the radical perspective that is hard can be filtered with an inclusive tauhid paradigm or mindset.(Zaluchu, 2024) Students are expected to be moderate by adopting information that is in accordance with Islam and Indonesian cultures.(Prastowo Suharto T. & Widodo S. A., 2023)

### **The Learning Strategies of Religious Moderation in the Digital Era**

The learning curriculum above must be implemented through various appropriate learning strategies. Learning strategies play a crucial role in achieving learning objectives, particularly in the context of religious moderation. Well-designed learning strategies can help students understand the importance of religious moderation by providing them with the space to explore various religious perspectives objectively and openly.(Hanafi et al., 2023)

The teaching team at Baitul Arqom has taken several decisions in teaching strategies integrated with digital media, including the following: First, Concept Map and Information Search. Lecturers provide sources such as designated books and several academic articles for students to study. Students are asked to summarize and map the framework of the material by creating a concept map. This helps them understand the material globally. The concept map is supported by an information search strategy, where lecturers provide questions for students to

answer based on the materials provided by the lecturer. This strategy sharpens students' understanding.(Hidayati, Zubaidah, Suarsini, & Praherdhiono, 2020)

Second, True or False Strategy. Lecturers present statements, and students choose "True or False" and provide their reasoning. The statements offered usually concern controversial religious concepts such as "All religions are the same," "Only the Salaf school enters heaven," "A good infidel deserves heaven more than a bad Muslim," or "It's permissible to worship with non-Muslims in their places of worship to maintain tolerance," and so on. This strategy tests students' ability to analyze various religious issues in social life and requires them to provide solutions.

Third, Forum Group Discussion. In this forum, all students engage in questions and answers regarding the themes learned, not limited to theories, but also societal issues. Students are free to access answers from various sources, and the lecturer provides clarification or additional answers at the end.(Manojkumar & Krishnan, 2025)

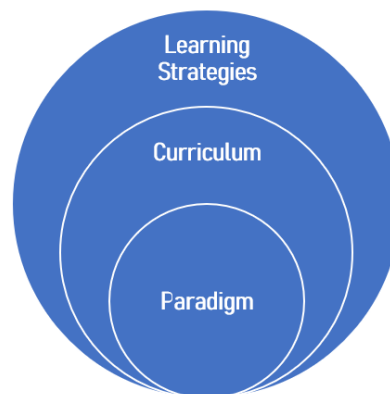
Fourth, Project-Based Learning. Students are then tasked with creating a specific project that has broader benefits. These projects can include short sermon videos, prayer practices, or posters inviting good deeds that are then uploaded to their social media. Project-based learning must be grounded in moderate religious understanding, such as the importance of being open-minded, respecting differing opinions among Muslims, and avoiding extreme understandings leading to terrorism. (J. Zhang, Wu, Sun, Yang, & Zhou, 2023) Through this assignment, students are not only required to understand and apply what they have learned but also to teach, socialize, or disseminate the knowledge they have acquired. This task is also a form of digital da'wah.

The material sources at Baitul Arqom are not limited to books and academic articles provided by lecturers, but students are given the freedom to access various sources, including digital platforms and social media. Students are provided with secondary material sources, such as opinions on certain issues from community organizations via their websites, such as the Majlis Tarjih Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Salafi, Majlis Tafsir Al-Qur'an, and others.

The next step is for the lecturer to provide additional answers and explain the reasons for differing opinions, such as differences in the references of imams, interpretations of a verse or hadith, socio-cultural differences, and so on. In conclusion, the lecturer presents Muhammadiyah's stance amidst these differences and explains why Muhammadiyah holds that position. Students are required to understand the material and compare opinions from various groups to be aware of the societal reality of differing views, which cannot be forced to follow just one school of thought. Students are encouraged to tolerate various differing opinions, even if they do not align with their own. (Von Bergen, 2012)

Based on the explanation of the management of moderation in religious learning above, it can be concluded that there is continuity between the paradigm,

curriculum, and implementation of learning strategies, as explained in the chart below.



**Chart. 1.1** The Concept of Religious Moderation Learning Management

Based on the chart above, it can be understood that an inclusive, tolerant, and progressive paradigm is a fundamental foundation in building moderate education. This paradigm will be the spirit in developing moderate religious education activities.

This paradigm must be described in the curriculum, especially the learning materials that will be delivered to students, namely Aqidah and Morals. The material must be built and prioritize an inclusive, tolerant, and progressive mindset. The curriculum must be taught through various innovative, creative, and open-minded learning strategies so that the learning process runs well and produces a moderate attitude in students.

The inclusive, tolerant, and progressive attitudes promoted must not contradict the concept of tauhid. These attitudes must align with tauhid principles, which do not violate the core matters of religion. Baitul Arqom UMS firmly rejects misplaced or excessive tolerance, such as equating all religions in terms of divinity, reconstructing the pillars of faith and Islam, criticizing the Qur'an on the grounds of modern relevance, rejecting the Islamic inheritance system due to socio-cultural changes, and other similar issues.

The inclusive and tolerant concept taught by Baitul Arqom UMS may only be applied in secondary matters, such as differences in prayer recitations, methods for determining the start and end of Ramadan, or acceptance or rejection of the concept of dividing tauhid. The interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith through modern scientific approaches needs to be developed as a form of inclusiveness, but it must not contradict with Qat'i Islamic law, which is definitive and leaves no room for reconstruction.

## CONCLUSION

The promotion of religious moderation must be continuously encouraged, especially as extremism and liberalism are increasingly spreading in the digital era.

This era presents its own challenges in developing a moderate religious education. Therefore, it is important to formulate appropriate management in implementing moderate religious learning. Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta plays a strategic role through the Baitul Arqom program, teaching a moderate approach to religion. Religious moderation education is built on a paradigm of inclusiveness, tolerance, and progressiveness. This paradigm nurtures Muslims with a strong foundation in tauhid (the oneness of God), while also fostering an open-minded attitude toward contemporary developments, rejecting static thinking.

This approach is implemented through curriculum management and interactive, innovative, and adaptive learning strategies that are in line with the digital era. Students are encouraged to analyze current religious issues and study the diverse opinions of scholars. This practice is essential as it trains students to respect differences in scholars' opinions, thus preventing the rise of extremism and radicalism.

This research makes a significant contribution to understanding how religious moderation learning can be implemented in higher education, particularly in the rapidly evolving digital era. This study has limitations in that it focused solely on the Baitul Arqom program at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, so the results cannot be generalized to other educational institutions that teach religious moderation. Future research could examine the challenges faced by lecturers in adapting the religious moderation curriculum to a digital context, as well as explore more deeply students' perceptions and experiences of religious moderation learning materials.

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