

Religious Moderation Through Arabic Language References For Religious Courses Of State Islamic Universities

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Abstract

Religious moderation, believed to be the solution to radicalism in Indonesia, has a real obstacle in terms of a tendency to use English language references. Meanwhile, they are considered to be full of liberalization and pro-Western politics. This research examined the insertion of religious moderation through Arabic language references. It aimed to offer religious moderation with more comprehensive Arabic religious references on religious materials. The research was qualitative and used a case study method. The subjects were nine lecturers and seven students from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Malang, who were selected purposively. The research found that religious moderation was inserted into the religious material through CLO, teaching materials with original Arabic texts, and the learning process. The three insertion models were chosen to follow instructions from university leaders, introduce the terminology of religious moderation from Arabic and non-Arabic language references, and ground religious moderation among students. Besides, using original Arabic text references is quite effective and grows students' confidence. This research suggested that when inserting religious moderation, especially at PTKI, we should include Arabic references because it has been proven to increase students' confidence effectively.

Keywords: Religious Moderation; Courses; Arabic Language; References

INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation, which has become the mainstream in Islamic discourses of Indonesian higher education in the recent era, has encountered many obstacles. This condition occurs because the references used are in English, so they are seen as having liberal motives and pro-Western politics. Several studies confirm that moderation in the West is synonymous with liberalization and politics that tend to support Western parties (Ab Rashid et al., 2020; Hilmy, 2013; Islam & Khatun, 2015). For Hilmy (2013), after the collapse of the WTC Twin Towers (11 September 2001), moderate Islam was dragged into a religious identity contestation that differentiated the identities of pro-Western and pro-extremist circles. Pro-Western people are typically called moderates. In fact, siding with Israel or at least avoiding confrontation, even politically, with them is a condition for being called moderate. Those who do not support the United States coalition's stance towards Israel are considered militant Muslims (Burhani, 2012).

Ideally, religious moderation is seen as a solution to radicalism in Indonesia (Dodego & Witro, 2020; Kementerian Agama RI, 2019; Sujono et al., 2022). However, studies indicated that radicalism, in reality, is spreading in various universities. Several research institutions, such as the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM), the

National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), the Alvara Research Center, and the Setara Institute have drawn conclusions about student behavior that tends to be radical (Ali et al., 2021; Sirry, 2020). This radicalism phenomenon does not only occur in General Universities (PTU) but also Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI). Research conducted by Khozin (2013), Syamsurijal (2017), Asriani (2019), and Ismail et al. (2021) confirms the spread of radicalism within PTKI. Radicalism at PTKI occurs at a fluctuating level and the seeds are growing among not only students of exact studies but also in other studies. Afwadzi et al. (2023) found that the potential for radicalism at PTKI actually emerged from social-humanities and religious study programs as a type of science that has been understood to be far from radicalism (Azra, 2020); Ali et al., 2022).

Teaching religious materials, until now, is considered to highly contribute in the cultivation of religious moderation in the educational environment. In fact, even in the context of higher education, the teaching of religious material still seems to have very real significance. Burhanuddin & Ilmi (2022) stated that reformulating the content of religious teaching in universities could be a means of minimizing radicalism. correspondingly, research by Ma'arif et al. (2022) suggested that religious moderation can strengthen religious teaching by producing students who have moderate religious understanding and practice. This aims to ensure that they can avoid radicalism that has spread in universities. With the right approach and appropriate references in Arabic, religious teaching can be an effective tool in increasing the correct understanding of religious moderation and building a society that is tolerant, open, prioritizes dialogue and is not anti-diversity (Afwadzi & Miski, 2021; Suprpto, 2020) and can ensure that the material on religious moderation corresponds to the values of Islamic teachings and religious traditions. Religious messages cannot be captured if people only rely on translated references, therefore religious moderation references in Arabic are considered to improve understanding correctly and in accordance with the values in the original text (in Arabic). Therefore, understanding religious moderation through Arabic language references is considered quite significant, therefore competency in Arabic is a necessity (Purwanto, A. 2017).

For this reason, the study concerns the way to instill the values of religious moderation through Arabic language references in religious teaching considering that currently many religious moderation activities using non-English religious references are increasingly carried out day by day (Achmad et al., 2023; Azhar, 2022; Husna & Thohir, 2020; Sabara, 2023; Smeer & Rosyidah, 2021; Suprpto, 2020). Furthermore, if studies regarding the cultivation of religious moderation in the teaching of religious material are mapped, three major trends will emerge. First, a study of theoretical explanations regarding the relationship between religious moderation and religious teaching, so that the contribution of religious moderation to the development of religious material will be clearly visible. Studies in this first trend have resulted in the understanding that religious moderation is vital for producing students with an inclusive and tolerant outlook (Masturin, 2023; Mizani, 2022; Muaz & Ruswandi, 2022; Pajarianto et al., 2022). Second, a study regarding the cultivation of religious moderation in teaching religious material which focuses on the realm of primary and secondary education. This second tendency is often actualized in the aspects of the curriculum and learning materials, raising the internalization and integration of religious moderation in religious materials (Hasan & Huda, 2022; Huda et al., 2023; Husna & Thohir, 2020; Nugroho & Nailufaz, 2022). The third, a study on how to implement religious moderation in religious material

in higher education, which places more emphasis on PTU with the PAI format. Such a process then produces students who think moderately and still have strong Islamic roots (Anwar & Muhayati, 2021; Fuad, 2019; Nabhani et al., 2023; Sapdi et al., 2022; Sodikin & Ma'arif, 2021).

In contrast to some of these tendencies, this article examines the insertion of religious moderation through Arabic religious references in Religious Materials at PTKI. It aims to offer religious moderation with more comprehensive Arabic language religious references for religious material. Because after all, religious material at PTKI is reviewed and studied in more detail in some special courses. Not to mention if the course is colored by the uniqueness of a university. In this regard, this article consists of several discussion focuses consisting of descriptive, critical and implicative studies. First, a descriptive study discussing the form of insertion of religious moderation in religious material carried out by lecturers. Second, a critical study was carried out by examining the reasons for selecting insertions as explained previously. Third, an implicative study is carried out by examining the impact of the insertions made by the lecturer. To achieve this impact, of course, it must be strengthened by information from students who receive teaching from the lecturer.

Religious Moderation is derived from the word moderate which means middle (Helmy et al., 2021; Shihab, 2020; Zaduqisti et al., 2020). It is a pattern of religious behavior oriented towards a middle position; neither liberal nor radical. Therefore, the moderate aspect is the behavior or practice of religious adherents and not the religion itself. The Ministry of Religious Affairs believes that religion has been moderate since it was first revealed. However, at the level of reality, sometimes the behavior of religious adherents is found to not reflect the moderation values. This aspect is the object that must be changed with the concept of religious moderation (Ministry of Religious Affairs of Republic of Indonesia, 2019). There are nine keywords in religious moderation: humanity, public benefit, justice, balance, obeying the constitution, national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and respect for tradition. The last four words then become indicators of religious moderation (Afwadzi et al., 2023).

Basically, the insertion of religious moderation is one of the strategies for implementing religious moderation in education, as Ministry of Religious Affairs directed. It is interpreted as inserting religious moderation content in every relevant material. Indeed, some of the materials in the learning curriculum within the Ministry of Religious Affairs already contains religious moderation. Therefore, its implementation is directed at the way to link these substances with religious moderation, so it is applicable in everyday life (Aziz et al., 2021; Sumarto, 2021). Furthermore, the religious teaching model at PTKI has differences from that at PTU. This distinction revolves around the difference in complexity of studies between the two. At PTU, religious teaching takes the Islamic Religious Education courses, which are the culmination of several discussion materials, namely the Quran, hadith, fiqh, history of Islamic culture, and moral beliefs. However, at PTKI, religious teaching takes specifications for several religious materials. Thus, these four materials are in separate courses with names typical of a university. The insertion of religious moderation at PTKI in religious material in this paper is intended to be an effort to include religious moderation in the four courses.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method in the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang (hereinafter referred to as UIN Malang). There are several arguments regarding the selection of this research object. Firstly, UIN Malang is a PTKI predicted to be a World Class University (WCU), and it has received an award as the campus with the most foreign students and all new students are required to take a part in the Arabic language learning program. Second, the leadership of UIN Malang has instructed lecturers to insert the values of religious moderation in classroom learning materials and has even formed a consortium and textbooks related to religious moderation. Third, the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK) is the spearhead at UIN Malang in producing quality teaching staff who are widely spread throughout Indonesia, so it has a strategic position in developing religious moderation.

The primary data for this research was obtained from observations, documentation, and interviews at FITK UIN Malang, while the secondary ones were collected from various literature that discussed religious moderation in religious material and PAI. Using a purposive sampling technique, the informants as research subjects were seven lecturers and nine students who were selected purposively. Each of these lecturers was a teacher of religious courses included in the MKKU courses, which were Al-Qur'an Studies, Al-Hadith Studies, Theosophy, Fiqh Studies, and History of Islamic Civilization in the Arabic and non-Arabic Language Education study programs. These five courses are included in the religious group at UIN Malang. Apart from that, the seven lecturers have skills in classical Islamic literature in Arabic and are also included in the MKU-MKKU Lecturer Consortium (General Courses-University Specialty Courses) Based on Ulul Albab, Religious Moderation, and Anti-Corruption values and have been decreed by the university. They have also participated in the religious moderation insertion training carried out by UIN Malang. Meanwhile, nine students were students who had received teaching from the lecturer concerned. The names of lecturers and students will only be mentioned by initials to maintain confidentiality of identity.

The research employed a data analysis approach involving data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification as referred to Miles, M.B, Huberman, A.M, and Saldana (2014). Data condensation comprised several steps: collecting data on religious moderation insertion through Arabic language references to religious material by observation, documentation, interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) methods; organizing the data by grouping based on answer characteristics, cleaning irrelevant and damaged data, and sorting and combining in order to reduce data complexity. Data presentation is carried out by describing and communicating data on the insertion of religious moderation in religious material through important points for better understanding. Finally, conclusions are drawn by analyzing, interpreting, connecting with theory and other literature, and drawing up conclusions from data that has gone through the stages of data condensation and presentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms Of Insertion Of Religious Moderation In Religious Courses

One course and another have their own characteristics, so the insertion model of religious moderation is not the same. However, every religious subject material, including Al-Qur'an Studies, Al-Hadith, Theosophy, History of Islamic Civilization, and Fiqh

Studies, has included religious moderation in lectures. The author found at least three forms of insertion, through Course Learning Outcomes (CLO), teaching materials with Arabic references, and the learning process.

1. Insertion of Religious Moderation through CLO. CLO occupies an important position in the preparation of the Semester Learning Plan (SLP) because it is an ability specifically explained in the Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLO) assigned to the course. Or in other words, CLO is a derivative of GLO in a particular course. In the SLP for Islamic education courses: Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadith Studies, Theosophy, History of Islamic Civilization, and Fiqh Studies, and the religious moderation values appear as colors within. For example, the SLP of History of Islamic Civilization state the following in the second CLO "able to integrate the values of the History of Islamic Civilization with the values of *Ulul Albab*, religious moderation and anti-corruption in social, national and state life." N, a lecturer in the History of Islamic Civilization, emphasized that according to the agreement between the consortium of the lecturers in the History of Islamic Civilization, all study programs are required to use the same SLP. Thus, the SLP and its parts, including CLO, become a reference in learning, and the value is inserted directly to the material. Likewise, it also happens in Theosophy courses. The SLP of this course also explicitly mentions religious moderation in CLO. The second and third CLOs states, "able to show moderate, tolerant, honest and *ihsan* attitudes and character" and "able to solve problems with Islamic character and national spirit".
2. Insertion of Religious Moderation through teaching materials using Arabic references. The second insertion model is through religious teaching material. The teaching material involves religious moderation and its values as one of the topics to discuss. Religious moderation is discussed using Arabic language references in the 15th meeting. This related teaching material is quite complete, from the meaning of religious moderation, the history of the emergence of religious moderation terminology, indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodating local culture, and the way the Quran and hadith deliver the values regarding religious moderation. F, a lecturer in the Quran and Hadith Studies, stated that the inclusion of this material was a direct implementation related to the insertion of religious moderation in the SLP. Other courses are also prominent although they show their roles in different forms. The History of Islamic civilization paid special attention to religious moderation in its 13th to 15th meetings. The 13th meeting examines the typology of revivalist movements in the Islamic world and gives examples of nationalist values and attitudes; the 14th meeting discusses the relevant moderate, accommodative, tolerant, non-violent, and wise values of the Islamic renewal movement; and the 15th meeting discusses reviews and evaluations related to the integration of *Ulul Albab* values, religious moderation, and anti-corruption in the History of Islamic Civilization material with the science studied. Meanwhile, Theosophy discusses religious moderation in the 15th meeting with material on the relationship between Islamic theology and contemporary Sufism in the challenges of moderation. SF, one of the students from the Arabic Language Education study program stated that he would be more confident if theosophical teaching materials, especially those that study religious moderation, are referenced from the original texts, namely Arabic language references.

3. Insertion of Religious Moderation through the Learning Process. Learning process is more important than CLO and teaching materials because it determines the quality and character of the graduates in the future. In general, each lecturer embeds religious moderation through the learning process with their own variations. They relate the discussion in the courses to the aspects of religious moderation. In another course, S and F, lecturers of Fiqh Studies, said that intra-religious tolerance and accommodating local culture were important areas of their courses. Even though none of the Fiqh study materials textually talked about religious moderation, the direction of learning aimed to the values of religious moderation. Apart from that, L, a Theosophy lecturer, argued that in the learning process, the insertion of religious moderation was established through open discussion sessions where students could talk about religious sects in their respective areas in the context of Theosophy, with an emphasis on similarities and differences. and the importance of tolerance and understanding between one another. Besides, the insertion was also made by analyzing incidents where attitudes that did not emphasize tolerance, national commitment and non-violence then led to religious conflict, namely the *tahkim* incident; also exploring how religion, local traditions and customs united in religious rituals. It aimed to reduce excessive fanaticism towards certain religious sects, reduce prejudice, and promote an open attitude towards diversity of beliefs in a pluralistic society.

Reasons for Choosing The Model Of Religious Moderation Insertion In Islamic Education

1. Instruction of University Leaders. The university leaders, which in this case is headed by WR 1 for academic affairs, command to incorporate religious moderation values into learning in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. For this reason, on 22 to 24 August 2022 a workshop on curriculum based on Ulul Albab, religious moderation and anti-corruption values was held. Correspondingly, the insertion was not only based on religious moderation but also Ulul Albab as a characteristic of UIN Malang and anti-corruption values as a mandate of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This workshop activity produced SLPs, which were completed with these three points, according to the relevance of the material in the course. Apart from that, this activity also resulted in a consortium that houses MKU-MKKU lecturers based on Ulul Albab, religious moderation, and anti-corruption values and received a decree directly from the university. The four PAI courses in this research were also included.

Then, to specifically strengthen religious moderation, a program for strengthening religious moderation was also held by Islamic Religious Higher Education through LPDP funding. UIN Malang also took a part in this activity, which was held from 8 to 12 December 2022. Many lecturers who were listed as members of the MKU-MKKU Consortium were selected to take part in this activity. Furthermore, as a follow up, on 1 to 2 August 2023, an Evaluation Workshop on CLO and SLP of MKU-MKKU was held. A few days later, from 9 to 10 August 2023, a workshop on writing textbooks for MKU-MKKU courses was held which focused on Ulul Albab, religious moderation, and anti-corruption values. It is true that until now the insertion of religious moderation is undergoing improvements, yet university leaders play a big role in choosing the insertion models to take.

2. Introducing Religious Moderation Terminology to Students. For some people, religious moderation could be taboo, so acceptance is not smooth. In fact, some groups view that religious moderation is only a project of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and it refers to liberal religious behavior. For this reason, introducing religious moderation as a terminology is important. Students must know what religious moderation is initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the issues related to it. Don't let students receive invalid information regarding religious moderation. Hence, religious moderation is a special material that needs to be raised, especially when examined with the Quran and hadith as the primary sources in Islam. This process will provide confidence that religious moderation is not a contemporary discourse with no basis in Islam. Even further, Islam, through the Quran and hadith, legitimizes religious moderation. This information is conveyed by F, a lecturer of the Quran and Hadith Studies, as the reason why religious moderation is discussed in the 15th meeting.

Grounding Religious Moderation Among Students

The following reason is to establish religious moderation. This reason is different from the previous one because it is more about making the values of religious moderation well understood by the students so that they can actualize them. S, a lecturer in Fiqh Studies, stated:

“Fiqh material is not given only to be understood but also practiced because in fiqh, differences of opinion must happen, and diverse Muslim communities also adopt these differences. Within its practice, it will certainly come into contact with people or groups with different views, so if the values of religious moderation are not instilled, there will be the potential for conflict to arise. Therefore, it is necessary to insert the values of religious moderation so that students respect these differences.”

Similarly, N, a lecturer of the History of Islamic Civilization, believed that even though in his teaching, the written material on religious moderation was only available at the 13th to 15th meetings. The values of religious moderation were always included in all materials during class. Reflection on history learning is also the key to religious moderation. This aspect will, in turn, become an example and an inspiration for the nation's young generation in facing the rapid changes in social, cultural, political, economic, science and technology, arts, and others. In this way, the values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, non-violence, and accommodating to local culture, will be understood by students.

The Impact Of Religious Moderation Insertion On Islamic Education

Religious moderation is embedded in the courses so that students are open-minded and inclusive. In this context, optimism appears in the insertions made. N, a lecturer of the History of Islamic Civilization, believes that students can take lessons and wisdom from every learning material and claims that this method effectively instills religious moderation in students. The belief is also expressed by F (a lecturer of Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadith Studies) and S (a lecturer of Jurisprudence Studies). Furthermore, according to L, with religious moderation, students can learn that religious diversity and traditions are not a source of division but forces that enrich national commitment. In this case, education emphasizing tolerance and respect for diversity will create more open individuals and a

more inclusive society. By understanding the importance of non-violent values, students are more likely to seek and implement peaceful solutions.

Meanwhile, students as the recipient of the materials, I (student) clearly stated that studying religious moderation could change his mindset towards tolerance, as he argued:

Honestly, studying moderation has made me know my religion and myself better. With the understanding of moderation, I become a more tolerant and can accept differences. When I saw differences in religion, I used to feel that other people were wrong and only I was right. However, after studying moderation further, it was enough to inspire my thoughts and feelings that the difference is a blessing from Allah." Meanwhile, M (student) stated that "...after I gained insight into religious moderation, I could understand the existence of differences related to religious beliefs. I also could position myself when I saw a difference of opinion and with no immediate judgment. I am also more confident when I use an original text, the Arabic version, as the reference."

Indeed, some people do not know in depth about religious moderation, which sometimes results in rejection. Religious moderation is deemed to contradict the teachings of the Islamic religion. This case also happens to some students. However, after undergoing lectures examining religious moderation, students' ignorance can be overcome. The effect is acceptance of the discourse of religious moderation. U, a student who is initially less familiar with religious moderation and less appreciative of it, becomes increasingly aware of religious moderation. Also, he is a presenter for this material. He realizes that moderation in believing in religion is different from religious moderation. Meanwhile, his college friend L, a student, stated, "...the discourse voiced by the Ministry of Religious Affairs is religious moderation. Religious moderation is moderating religious behavior, not the religion itself. For me, Islam has been moderate from the start and does not need to be moderated again."

What can We Infer?

This paper found three important things related to the insertion of religious moderation through Arabic language references in religious courses at Islamic Religious Higher Education (PTKI): Quran and Hadith Studies, History of Islamic Civilization, Theosophy, and Fiqh Studies. First, religious moderation in religious material is established in three models: insertion through CLO, teaching materials using original Arabic texts, and the learning process. Second, the reasons for choosing such models revolve around three motives: following the instructions of university leaders, introducing the terminology of religious moderation from Arabic and non-Arabic language references to students directly, and grounding religious moderation among students. Third, the impact of the insertion using the original Arabic text as a reference is quite pronounced, and it grows confidence in students because they understand religious moderation better and more deeply. Apart from that, the values of religious moderation can also be well ingrained within students.

The above findings show that the insertion of religious moderation through Arabic language references in religious courses at PTKI is more comprehensive because it uses original Arabic texts and involves various special courses on religion. Hence, the insertion model can adapt to various religious learning materials and refer to the original text. Students can understand religious moderation or its values, linked to the materials the

lecturers bring. The follow-up effect is that this moderate understanding will be implemented in everyday life. The three insertion forms will enrich the study of religious materials incorporated in moderation in higher education. The insertion of religious moderation or the values within have a significant role in shaping students' moderate understanding and behavior, eroding the radicalism within students. To achieve maximum results, explicit policies, such as the current research findings, are required by higher education leaders.

This research implies that the model for inserting religious moderation upon preparing the curriculum for religious material and Islamic religious education, must be prioritized by reference to original Arabic religious texts because it has been proven to increase confidence and is quite effective. Religious teaching with Arabic references means the transfer of knowledge and the inheritance of values. Therefore, Arabic language references are initially parts of a personal-cultural configuration and have changed to an instrumental-functional configuration (Ali et al., 2022). However, this insertion must look at the characteristics of each religious material, which are not the same. If it can be inserted into teaching material, it must be inserted so that students can understand religious moderation terminologically from the source. This process will be difficult once policies are not followed by higher education leaders in various models. The written policy will increase the cultivation of religious moderation (Putri et al., 2023).

With all their shortcomings, the study results contribute to further refining and enliven the various methods designed by many researchers to instill religious moderation. Several other studies have different presentations from what this article produces; for example, Nabhani et al. (2023) mention the form of instilling religious moderation in Islamic education in several ways, namely understanding the methodology of Islamic teachings, the substance of the Islamic education curriculum directed at moderate character, the role models and attitudes of Islamic education lecturers, the existence of discussion rooms, Quran learning programs, mentoring and coaching of student activity units, and evaluations. There is also a strategy for mainstreaming religious moderation, namely strengthening the moderation paradigm, curriculum, and learning, as explained by Suryadi (2022). As explained in this article, the insertion of religious moderation feels more concrete than the strategies. It goes in line with the research finding of Ajahari et al. (2023) that religious moderation is inserted through Citizenship Education and Religious Moderation courses. Meanwhile, Hasan & Huda (2022) found that the insertion only happens in Islamic Education majors.

CONCLUSION

Under the explicit guidance of higher education leaders and informed by rational considerations, Islamic Religious Higher Education, as exemplified by research at FITK UIN Malang, has developed three approaches to integrate religious moderation. These methods include the use of Course Learning Outcomes (CLO), incorporating original Arabic references into teaching materials, and shaping the learning process itself. Given that in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), religious content is disseminated across various courses such as Quran and Hadith Studies, History of Islamic Civilization, Theosophy, and Fiqh Studies, the incorporation of religious moderation aligns with the distinct characteristics of these courses, ensuring a comprehensive integration. The fundamental implication of this research underscores the importance of prioritizing a model for embedding religious moderation in religious materials and Islamic Education.

This prioritization is crucial for mitigating student radicalism, as evidenced by its proven effectiveness. To enhance the efficacy and persuasiveness of these efforts, it is recommended to utilize original religious references in Arabic and implement explicit policies endorsed by higher education leaders.

This study is limited to FITK UIN Malang, focusing solely on one faculty. The findings may not be universally applicable, and different results could emerge in diverse university settings. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of religious moderation integration in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), it is crucial to extend research to include various university environments. Given that the insertion of religious moderation is a direct policy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, future research should specifically examine how this policy is implemented in universities, particularly those under the Ministry's purview.

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