

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ISLAMIC MODERATION IN CENTRAL JAVA'S UNIVERSITIES

Imam Kanafi, Mustafa Hamed Hasan Bin Sumeet,** Imam Mujahid,*** Irfan A. N.,**** & Syamsul Bakfiri**

*Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Indonesia

**Al-Ahgaff University, Yemen

***Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia

****Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

Email: imam.kanafi@uingusdur.ac.id

Abstract

Radicalism in universities has transformed into covert movements that avoid overt religious symbols and utilize technology to infiltrate academic communities. This study explores how radical groups adapt within university environments in Central Java, and analyze campus policies' and extra-campus organizations' role in promoting religious moderation. Using a qualitative method and a phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Grounded in cultural identity theory, the study investigates how the academic community's religious identities respond to radical infiltration. The findings reveal that Central Java universities established Islamic traditions and facilities, including religious moderation centers, moderation gardens, and multifaith worship spaces to resist radicalism, promoting interfaith tolerance. Extra-campus organizations significantly influence attitudes toward tolerance and religious moderation, depending on the dominant organizations' nature at each institution. Radical groups, including Salafi Jihadi, Ikhwanul Muslimin, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), Takfiri groups, and

ISIS have infiltrated extra-campus Islamic organizations. In response, universities implemented strict policies and preventive measures to combat radicalism. This study provides a deeper understanding of the campus' strategies and highlights extracurricular organizations' role in promoting religious moderation.

Radikalisme di perguruan tinggi telah bertransformasi menjadi gerakan terselubung tanpa menonjolkan simbol agama dan menggunakan teknologi untuk menyusup ke komunitas akademik. Artikel ini mengeksplor bagaimana kelompok radikal beradaptasi di lingkungan universitas di Jawa Tengah serta menganalisis peran kebijakan kampus dan organisasi ekstrakurikuler kampus dalam mempromosikan moderasi beragama. Menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumen. Teori identitas budaya digunakan untuk memahami terbentuknya identitas keagamaan civitas akademika dalam menghadapi infiltrasi radikalisme. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa kampus-kampus di Jawa Tengah memiliki tradisi keislaman dan fasilitas seperti pusat moderasi beragama, taman moderasi, serta tempat ibadah bagi semua agama untuk melawan kelompok radikal sekaligus menjadi sarana pembelajaran toleransi antarumat beragama bagi seluruh civitas akademika. Organisasi ekstra kampus sangat penting dalam membentuk sikap toleransi dan moderasi, tergantung pada karakter organisasi. Kelompok radikal seperti Salafi Jihadi, Ikhwanul Muslimin, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), kelompok Takfiri, dan ISIS telah menyusup ke dalam organisasi Islam ekstra kampus. Sebagai respon, universitas juga menerapkan kebijakan tegas dan langkah pencegahan yang efektif dalam menangkal radikalisme. Penelitian ini memberikan pemahaman mendalam tentang strategi kampus serta peran organisasi ekstrakurikuler kampus dalam mempromosikan moderasi beragama.

Keywords: *cultural identity; Islamic moderation; university*

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Introduction

The concern about the infiltration of radical movements into universities is well-founded. Recent studies highlight how these groups increasingly adopt covert strategies to attract young students, particularly by using non-religious activities and technological means to penetrate academic environments. Radical groups often take advantage of the fact that young students, especially those in a phase of identity exploration, are vulnerable to ideological manipulation that may lead them to adopt beliefs that conflict with the core values of Pancasila. For instance, research shows that many students have varying levels of understanding of radicalism, making them susceptible to exposure to radical ideologies. Universities, while promoting open-mindedness and religious moderation, face significant challenges in curbing the indirect influence of radical groups (Achmad et al. 2023, 127). Moreover, policy discussions emphasize that campus regulations designed to limit explicit religious radicalism have led these groups to adapt their methods, integrating into student organizations or online spaces to spread their messages without raising immediate suspicion (Aisy 2021 248; Basri & Dwiningrum 2019, 84).

Recent research highlights various aspects of identity formation and radicalization. Hollewell and Longpré explore how digital platforms contribute to radicalization among youth by focusing on identity formation and online influences in their study entitled *Radicalization in the Social Media Era* (Hollewell & Longpré 2022, 259). Meanwhile, Kanafi and Bakhri investigate how campus environments and policies can influence students' susceptibility to radical ideologies in their article, *University Campuses and Radicalization*. This study underscores the critical role of campus policies in preventing the spread of radical ideologies (Kanafi & Bakhri 2023, 271).

Additionally, Montasari discuss how radical groups use technological advancements to infiltrate academic institutions in *The Impact of Technology on Radicalization to Violent Extremism and Terrorism in the Contemporary Security Landscape* (Montasari 2022, 120). Moreover, Alvi and Rehman examine the role of Islamic education in shaping moderate identities among students in *Moderation and Extremism*. This research emphasizes the need for moderate education to counter extremism and provides guidelines on promoting moderation in academic settings (Alvi & Rehman 2023, 50). In addition, Rosi studying cultural identity among students is considered a pivotal aspect of education. This research explores trajectories of identities among Thai

Muslim and Chinese-Muslim students in Malang. Thai Muslim and Chinese students' learning identity is mostly passive and more individual compared to Indonesian students (Rosi 2017, 57; Rosi et al. 2024, 16). While these studies provide valuable insights into identity formation and the role of moderation, they primarily focus on different contexts and do not specifically address Islamic traditions and radicalism within Indonesian universities. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on Islamic traditions, student organizations, and the development of Islamic moderation character at universities in Central Java, Indonesia.

This study aims to examine how radical movements have infiltrated academic communities in Indonesian universities by disguising themselves through non-religious activities and utilizing technology. By analyzing the cultural identity of universities and their strategies for promoting religious moderation, the research seeks to develop effective deradicalization models and best practices for fostering Islamic moderation. Specifically, it focuses on the influence of campus policies, religious traditions, and extra-campus organizations in combating radicalism. The findings of this study will contribute to the creation of early detection instruments for identifying radical ideologies in Central Java and Indonesia, as well as provide practical guidelines for implementing religious moderation programs and deradicalization efforts in academic communities. This research, thus, offers a comprehensive framework for addressing radicalism in Indonesian higher education institutions.

Research Method

The article employs a qualitative approach using a phenomenological method to explore the development of Islamic moderation character in universities in Central Java, Indonesia. It focuses on Islamic traditions, extra-campus Islamic student organizations, and the character of Islamic moderation developed within these institutions. Informants for this study were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a representative sample. This included one institution under the Ministry of Education and Culture (Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta) and two institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Universitas Islam Negeri or UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta and UIN KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan) in Central Java. The criteria for informant selection encompassed gender, organizational background, and campus roles, including 4 student affairs

department leaders, 12 Islamic religion lecturers, 5 intra-campus activists, 5 extra-campus activists, and 4 active students. This approach ensures a rich and diverse dataset reflecting multiple perspectives. All informants provided informed consent, adhering to ethical research guidelines to ensure voluntary participation and the protection of their rights throughout the study.

Data collection methods included online Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), field observations, and in-depth interviews conducted either in person or via Zoom, capturing a wide range of viewpoints. Secondary data from Islamic traditions and student organizations complemented the primary data. Data reliability was ensured through triangulation and member-checking. Using phenomenological analysis, significant statements were coded into themes related to Islamic moderation in higher education. Guided by frameworks such as Husserl (2019), the research integrates primary and secondary data to provide a nuanced exploration of cultural identity and the character of Islamic moderation.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of Islamic Traditions and Religious Moderation in Universities

In Central Java's universities, there are various Islamic traditions practiced, such as *Halal bi Halal*, *Sungkeman*, *Ketupat* Tradition, *Tahlilan*, *Kenduri*, *Megengan*, *Syawalan*, *Silaturahmi*, and other Islamic Holiday Celebrations. Additionally, there are also *zakat* (alms) and *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) activities that use *Wayang* as a medium. Islamic traditions in universities in Central Java encompass various activities and events that reflect Islamic values and are conducted regularly. *Halal bi Halal* is a tradition usually held after Eid al-Fitr to seek forgiveness and strengthen bonds among the academic community. *Sungkeman*, a tradition of asking for forgiveness and showing respect to elders or senior lecturers, is often performed during special events. The *Ketupat* Tradition involves serving *ketupat* during certain events like Eid al-Fitr, while *Tahlilan* is a prayer gathering to commemorate or pray for the deceased. *Kenduri*, a communal feast typically accompanied by prayers, is held for various commemorations. *Megengan* is a tradition of welcoming Ramadan with communal meals, while *Syawalan* is a special *Halal bi Halal* event held in the month of Syawal after Eid al-Fitr.

"Islamic traditions such as *Halal bi Halal*, *Sungkeman*, and *Kenduri* are not just ceremonial events. They help foster a sense of community and respect between students, lecturers, and staff. In particular, *Halal bi Halal* creates a unique bond after Ramadan, where we seek forgiveness and start fresh. These traditions also reinforce the values of humility and togetherness, which are essential to the practice of religious moderation on campus. Additionally, programs like *Zakat* and interfaith discussions contribute to the spirit of tolerance and understanding between diverse groups on campus" (AR, AAJ, EF, interview, 2022)

Silaturahmi, aimed at strengthening relationships among campus members through various activities, is an integral part of Islamic traditions. Celebrations of major Islamic holidays, such as the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulid Nabi*) and *Isra Mi'raj*, are observed with solemnity. Islamic campuses also encourage the proper way of dressing aligned with Islamic teachings/sharia, including the requiring for women to cover their *aurat*. *Zakat* is collected and distributed among campus members to support those in need. Additionally, an innovative approach to *da'wah* using *Wayang* (a traditional art form) to convey Islamic messages. Furthermore, several campus activities support religious moderation. These include interfaith discussion groups at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, seminars, and religious moderation training at Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta, and community service programs (*Kuliah Kerja Nyata*) conducted by PTKIN in Central Java. These activities strengthen Islamic values and foster a sense of togetherness and tolerance among students and faculty. A lecturer shared:

"We often hold interfaith discussion groups to build better understanding among students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, Islamic holiday celebrations such as the Prophet's Birthday are important moments for strengthening *silaturahmi* on campus" (KML, interview, 2022).

In summary, Islamic traditions in universities in Central Java are integral to campus life. These traditions include *Halal bi Halal*, where students and staff seek forgiveness after Eid al-Fitr, and *Sungkeman*, a ritual of seeking blessings from elders. Other common traditions are the *Ketupat* Tradition, celebrating Eid al-Fitr with *Ketupat* dishes, and *Tahlilan*, involving prayer recitations for the deceased (Bahruddin 2019, 123). *Kenduri* is a

communal feast for religious events, while *Megengan* is a tradition performed before Ramadan that marks spiritual preparation (Huda 2021, 45).

Campus activities also support the character of religious moderation, such as UNS (Universitas Sebelas Maret) *Bersolawat* and weekly Quran recitations. Programs like Zakat and communal *iftar* (break fasting) during Ramadan reinforce moderation values within the campus community (Suyanto 2020, 78). Students' understanding of Islamic traditions varies, including practices like *Hadrah* and cemetery visits, which are seen as customary practices aligned with Islamic teachings (Mulyadi 2018, 102). Several lecturers explained,

"Campus holds events such as Syawalan and Megengan, which bring together students from different faculties and religious backgrounds. These events are not just about celebrating Islamic traditions but also about fostering religious tolerance and promoting peaceful coexistence. The use of traditional arts, like Wayang for da'wah, is fascinating because it merges cultural heritage with Islamic teachings in a way everyone can appreciate. These traditions allow us to engage in meaningful interfaith dialogues and collaborations, strengthening our commitment to religious moderation" (DA, MS, RAHM, interview, 2022).

Students' understanding of Islamic traditions varies widely. Some students view Islamic traditions as customary activities such as *Hadrah*, visiting cemetery, and *Al-Barzanji*. These traditions are considered in line with Islamic teachings that have been practiced since ancient times, such as *Maulid Nabi* and *Halal bi Halal* during Eid al-Fitr. Islamic traditions conducted on campus include *Hadrah*, which is often performed in various campus events, the recitation of *Al-Barzanji* for several times, study sessions, *silaturahmi*, and *halal bi halal*. A student shared:

"At our campus, we participate in various activities related to Islamic traditions, such as BIMA (Islamic Moderation and Etiquette Room), Halal bi Halal among organizations or lecturers, seminars, discussions, book reviews, and inter-organizational dialogues. These activities deepen our understanding of Islamic values and foster unity" (RIH, interview, 2022).

The Islamic academic culture also includes spiritual and scientific reinforcement, weekly studies, communal *iftar*, congregational prayers, and

handshakes upon meeting. At UIN, there are seminars on religious themes and routine studies conducted by the UKM (extra-campus organizations) Nurul Ilmi at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta. A campus activist explained:

"Islamic traditions are seen as time-honored practices with a strong Islamic nuance, such as Ramadan observances, the slaughter of sacrificial animals, and religious studies. These traditions are more than rituals—they represent regulations and behavioral patterns rooted in Islamic law for daily life" (A, AM, MYA, interview 2022).

Education on pluralism and religious moderation is an integral part of the curriculum, with courses providing students with the knowledge to live harmoniously in a diverse society. Interfaith social activities, such as community service and mutual cooperation, involve participation from various religious groups, strengthening bonds among students and the community. Inclusive counselling services and cultural festivals showcasing traditions from different religions also play a role in promoting tolerance and appreciation of diversity. Another lecturer commented,

"Religious moderation at our institution is built on principles of inclusivity, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue. We regularly organize interfaith discussions and open forums to foster mutual understanding and appreciation of differences. Collaboration among faith-based student organizations in both social and academic activities further strengthens interfaith relationships and promotes cooperation among students from diverse backgrounds" (NW, interview, 2022).

Additionally, universities in Central Java conduct training and workshops on religious moderation for lecturers, students, and staff and encourage research and publications on these topics. Character development programs integrating values such as tolerance, empathy, and cooperation are also a key focus. These efforts reflect a commitment to building a harmonious, just, and peaceful society amidst religious diversity.

Growth of Extra-Campus Islamic Student Organizations and Radical Movements in Central Java

The development of extra-campus Islamic student organizations in Central Java has undergone significant changes. Organizations that have

traditionally been dominant, such as HMI (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam/Islamic Student Association*), PMII (*Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia/Indonesian Islamic Student Movement Association*), and KAMMI (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia/Indonesian Muslim Students Alliance*), are now competing with new organizations like HMP Qis'ar (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Program Studi Sastra Arab/Association of Arabic Literature Study Program Student*) and JN UKMI (*Lembaga Dakwah Kampus Nasional/National Campus Da'wah Institute*). Additionally, there are also Islamic Student Health Organizations (LKMI/*Lembaga Kesehatan Mahasiswa Islam*), the Indonesian Red Crescent (BSMI/*Bulan Sabit Merah Indonesia*), and MERC (Medical Emergency Rescue Committee), although they are less developed compared to HMI, PMII, and KAMMI (Nugroho 2019, 89; Rohman 2022, 56). Several informants stated,

"Although organizations like HMI and PMII have long been established, the emergence of new organizations like Qis'ar brings a fresh dynamic. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity to showcase that Islamic moderation remains relevant to the younger generation" (AD, ANA, DBS, interview, 2022)

Extra-campus student organizations in Central Java include IPM (*Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah/Islamic Student Movement*), IQ UNS (*Ikatan Qiyadah UNS/UNS Qiyadah Association*), FMBA (*Forum Mahasiswa Bimbingan Quran/Islamic Students Association*), FORDISTA (*Forum Diskusi Mahasiswa Indonesia/Indonesian Student Forum*), MSC (Muslim Student Community), UKMI Nurul Ilmi (*Unit Kegiatan Mahasiswa Islam Nurul Ilmi*), JQH Al Wustho (*Jaringan Qari' dan Qari'ah Al Wustho/Qari' and Qari'ah Association*), IMM (*Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah/Muhammadiyah Student Movement*), KAMMI, and Youth Mosque. Students' understanding of these organizations encompasses movement activities, campus politics, and Quranic studies (Alfian 2021, 67). Organizations such as PMII and IMM are affiliated with large Islamic mass organizations, NU (*Nahdlatul Ulama*) and *Muhammadiyah*, showing the connection between campus organizations and larger mass organizations (Syafi'i 2020, 93).

The advantages of extra-campus Islamic organizations, including JQH, KAMMI, and PMII, are their significant influence and popularity among students. The majority of activists agree with Islamic moderation although

opinions can vary depending on specific contexts (Junaidi 2019, 110). However, there are some shortcomings, such as a lack of dialogue between organizations, inadequate facilities, and ideological differences leading to discomfort (Haryanto 2022, 84). Some informants expressed,

"Several informants explained that deficiencies limiting student participation in Islamic-based extra-campus organizations include a lack of reflection on Islamic values within the organizations, insufficient facilities, and concerns about teachings that may not align with Islamic principles. Additionally, issues such as inadequate information dissemination, ideological differences, and internal politics within the organizations often act as barriers. The lack of dialogue and collaboration between extra-campus organizations further discourages students from joining" (ASD, AY, H, interview, 2022).

The movement and development of extra-campus Islamic student organizations in Central Java over the past five years have shown significant dynamics. Organizations such as HMI, PMII, and KAMMI have increasingly engaged in various activities such as seminars, discussions, training, community service, and humanitarian actions.

"These activities aim to enhance religious, intellectual, and social awareness among students. In addition, these organizations are actively involved in social and political issues, organizing demonstrations and campaigns on national matters such as corruption, education, human rights, and community welfare" (ANM, NAP, WIS, interview, 2022).

However, this development is also marked by the infiltration of radical movements into Islamic extra-campus organizations. Some members and sympathizers of radical groups have attempted to influence and redirect the agendas of these student organizations to support their viewpoints. This is evident from the rise of more intense and exclusive rhetoric in some activities and public statements of the organizations. The entry of radical movements raises concerns about the potential spread of ideologies that conflict with the values of moderation and tolerance that these organizations have traditionally upheld.

"Radicalization through social media is a real threat. We need to be more proactive in educating our members about moderation values, so they can respond to radical ideologies wisely" (K, interview, 2022).

The use of technology and social media by Islamic student organizations, on the one hand, strengthens their *da'wah* and educational activities. On the other hand, it also provides a platform for the spread of radical ideologies. Social media has become an effective tool for radical groups to recruit new members and disseminate their propaganda. Some informants said,

"Many members of Islamic student organizations were exposed to radical ideologies through social media. They then attempted to influence their peers within the organization. This creates a significant challenge for these organizations to preserve their integrity and remain true to their original objectives" (AY, HS, MSA, SI, interview, 2022)

To address this challenge, Islamic student organizations in Central Java need to enhance their efforts in developing cadres and leadership committed to values of moderation and tolerance. Leadership and personal development training programs should emphasize the importance of balancing faith with openness to differences. Additionally, organizations should be more proactive in monitoring and addressing attempts of radical groups infiltration. Collaboration with educational institutions and local governments should also be increased to obtain support in the form of funding and facilities as well as to develop programs that can counter radicalism.

Support from educational institutions and the government is crucial in helping Islamic student organizations tackle the threat of radicalism. Educational institutions need to integrate values of moderation and tolerance into their curricula and provide space for interfaith discussions and dialogues. Local governments should also be active in providing education and anti-radicalism campaigns among students. With strong cooperation between student organizations, educational institutions, and the government, it is hoped that a conducive environment for the development of moderation and tolerance among students can be created.

Overall, although extra-campus Islamic student organizations in Central Java have shown positive growth, the challenges arising from the

influx of radical ideologies require serious attention. Organizations must continue to adapt and strengthen their commitment to the values of moderation and tolerance to maintain their integrity and original objectives. With the right approach, they can overcome these challenges and continue to make positive contributions to society and the nation.

"Most activists support Islamic moderation, although opinions can vary depending on the context. All organizations, whether extra-campus or intra-campus, agree that implementing Islamic moderation is beneficial for fostering harmony and collaboration" (AF, AMT, AOD, interview, 2022)

Work programs and activities related to Islamic traditions are also discussed. The campus under study mentions work programs or activities related to Islamic traditions, such as *Muqoddaman* and BIMA. Campus leaders also state that the developing organizations on their campus include PMII, HMI, IMM, BIMA, and LSO Harokatuna. A moderate attitude has become part of the learning outcomes and curriculum at the campus being studied.

"Radical movements have started to infiltrate extra-campus Islamic organizations. In Central Java, some of them promote ideologies that tend to be exclusive and often reject democratic and pluralistic values" (AJ, AR, HHT, interview, 2022)

First, Salafi Jihadi groups focus on a literal and strict interpretation of Islamic teachings. This group rejects any form of innovation in religious practices and even supports violence-based *jihad* to achieve its goals. It attempts to influence students with rhetoric about returning to "pure Islam," which can trigger radicalization among them. Second, the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul Muslimin*) has a strong political agenda to establish an Islamic state based on Sharia. This group influences student organizations with political Islamic ideology that emphasizes the importance of implementing Sharia in public life and governance. It attempts to integrate its principles into various campus activities, which can shift the orientation and goals of student organizations from moderate values to more conservative and exclusive ones.

Third, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) seeks to establish a global Islamic caliphate. HTI rejects democracy and nationalism, advocating for the

enforcement of Islamic Sharia as the only legal system. Although HTI has been dissolved in Indonesia, its ideology still circulates among students. *Fourth*, Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) has a long history of involvement in terrorism in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. It supports violent *jihād* and attempts to recruit new members through student organizations by offering extreme views on *jihād* and Sharia.

Fifth, *Takfiri* groups tend to label other Muslims who do not share their views as *kafir* (infidels). This ideology is particularly dangerous as it can incite internal conflict among Muslims and encourage violent actions against those deemed "impure" in their religious practices. *Sixth*, the influence of ISIS (Islamic State), though less popular than before, still exists and infiltrates student organizations. ISIS promotes a global *jihād*ist ideology and often uses online recruitment tactics to attract sympathizers among students, which can expand radicalization networks on campuses.

Islamic extra-campus organizations in Central Java need to be highly vigilant regarding the infiltration of radical ideologies. It is crucial for them to strengthen education on moderation, tolerance, and diversity within Islam, as well as to enhance monitoring of suspicious activities and rhetoric within their organizations. With the right approach, they can prevent radical ideologies from infiltrating and ensure that inclusive and moderate values remain the foundation of their activities, preserving their integrity and original goals in promoting Islam as a mercy to the world. Factors driving the implementation of Islamic moderation on campus include tolerance among students actively involved in organizations and curricula that incorporate Islamic moderation as part of the faculty's learning outcomes (Aminah 2021, 99).

Meanwhile, factors hindering this implementation include a lack of socialization of Islamic tradition activities, which causes some students to be unaware of such activities, and deficiencies in counter-radicalism measures (Rizki 2023, 112). Overall, Islamic traditions and extra-campus Islamic organizations in Central Java exhibit a complex dynamic in campus life. Although there have been advancements in the implementation of Islamic moderation and positive influences from various organizations, challenges remain in terms of inter-organizational dialogue and facilities supporting Islamic activities (Sutrisno 2021, 76). This research provides a comprehensive overview of the current state and offers recommendations

for enhancing the integration of Islamic traditions and religious moderation in the context of universities in Central Java.

Cultural Identity and Islamic Moderation in Universities: Insights from Key Stakeholders

This section delves into the role of cultural identity in fostering Islamic moderation within Central Java's universities. We will examine the perspectives of Islamic studies lecturers, students, and activists to understand how cultural practices and beliefs influence the development of moderate Islamic values.

Cultural Identity and Islamic Moderation: Islamic Studies Lecturers' Perspectives

The Islamic studies lecturers who are informants in this study all teach the character of Islamic moderation to their students. In teaching religious moderation, these lecturers introduce various Islamic traditions, such as *Halal bi Halal*, *Sungkeman*, *Ketupat* Tradition, *Tahlilan*, *Kenduri*, *Megengan*, *Syawalan*, *Silaturahmi*, Islamic Holidays, Zakat, and *da'wah* using Wayang. Campus activities that support the character of religious moderation are also conducted, including *Halal bi Halal*, weekly Quran recitations, UNS *bersolawat*/recite praises for the Prophet, *zakat*, and *ifthar* gatherings during Ramadan.

Notably, the character of Islamic moderation in Islamic studies courses is not always included in learning outcomes and Semester Learning Plans (RPS). However, some lecturers have incorporated the character of Islamic moderation into their learning outcomes and RPS. The character of Islamic moderation developed in universities in Central Java is reflected in several key aspects. First, these institutions accommodate a wide range of thoughts and beliefs from various streams, organizations, and religions. Second, they emphasize principles such as *tawassuth* (moderation), *tawâzun* (balance), and *tasâmuh* (tolerance), promoting acceptance of differing beliefs. Another significant element is the establishment of worship places for all six religions recognized by the state, located within a single area, fostering interfaith coexistence.

Several factors drive the implementation of Islamic moderation on these campuses. First, the open-mindedness of the academic community plays a crucial role. Additionally, strong policies, support from leadership, and transparency further facilitate this initiative. The unity as Indonesians,

guided by the principle of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'âlamîn* (mercy to all), promotes openness to diversity. Furthermore, Islamic teachings, combined with a supportive campus environment, encourage the practice of moderation.

The slogan of Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS) as a "Fortress Campus" and "Pancasila Pioneer" reflects the institution's commitment to these values. Campus policies are non-discriminatory, as seen in the presence of worship places for all six religions within the same area. The institutions also uphold Pancasila, the national philosophy, as a guiding principle. Finally, there is a strong emphasis on maintaining harmony, fostering national unity, and supporting one another to achieve these goals. Several factors hinder the implementation of Islamic moderation in universities in Central Java. First, there is an incomplete alignment of vision and understanding among some members of the academic community regarding the concept of moderation. This is further compounded by insufficient comprehension of Islam, the diversity of sects or groups followed, and political influences that affect campus dynamics. Additionally, a lack of coordination and integrated strategic efforts among relevant institutions poses a challenge.

Another issue is the limited individual awareness and understanding of the importance of moderation. There are also significant variations in the level of Islamic understanding among campus members, which affects their approach to moderation. Furthermore, a lack of open-mindedness in certain individuals hinders the acceptance of diverse perspectives. Lastly, differences in individual levels of understanding, experience, and spirituality also contribute to the challenges of fully realizing Islamic moderation on campuses.

Islamic studies lecturers in Central Java actively implement Islamic moderation through various Islamic activities such as *Halal bi Halal*, *Tahlilan*, and Islamic holiday celebrations. They also teach the principles of Islamic moderation through understanding different Islamic traditions and cultural approaches to *da'wah*. These activities are not merely rituals but also serve as a means to introduce the values of Islamic moderation to students. There are challenges in integrating Islamic moderation into higher education curricula. Some lecturers have successfully included the character of Islamic moderation in learning outcomes and Semester Learning Plans (RPS), but this is not yet widespread. Major challenges include differing understandings

among lecturers about Islamic moderation and limitations in adopting inclusive and integrated curricula.

Additionally, Islamic studies lecturers observe changes in extracurricular student organizations, with the rise of organizations such as Qis'ar and JN UKMI showing dynamics in the acceptance of Islamic moderation among students. Qis'ar, or Qiyâdah Islamiyah Shabâb al-Rahmah, focuses on leadership development and Islamic activities for youth. JN UKMI, the National Network of Islamic Student Activity Units, coordinates various Islamic student activity units across universities in Indonesia. Lecturers need to continuously adapt to these changes to ensure that Islamic moderation is taught in a relevant and effective manner.

Cultural Identity and Islamic Moderation: Students' Perspective

Students' understanding of Islamic traditions is highly varied. Some students view Islamic traditions as customary activities that include *Hadrah*, visiting graves, and *al-Barzanji*. Islamic traditions are customs aligned with Islam and have been practiced since ancient times, such as *Maulid* and *Halal bi Halal* during Eid al-Fitr. Islamic traditions practiced or held at the campus include *Hadrah*, often featured in campus events; *al-Barzanji* recitations, occasionally conducted on campus with communal prayers; study sessions; *Halal bi Halal* gatherings; and Islamic Academic Culture (BudAI), which focuses on strengthening spirituality and science and technology. Campus Islamic traditions encompass *Hadrah*, *al-Barzanji* recitations, *Maulid*, *Halal bi Halal*, weekly study sessions, *ifthar* gatherings, congregational prayers, and shaking hands upon meeting. At UIN, religious-themed seminars (*Tholabul Ilmi*) and routine study sessions (*Kantin*) are usually organized by UKMI Nurul Ilmi at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta.

The reasons students choose not to join intra- or extra-campus organizations are varied. One reason is the intense political dynamics between different organizations, which can be discouraging. Additionally, while some students may have a strong interest in contributing to these organizations, they might not meet the recruitment criteria. Others prefer to participate in off-campus activities, focusing on engaging with communities where their youth contributions and innovations are needed. Lastly, many students prioritize balancing their studies with work, leaving little time for organizational involvement.

Islamic extra-campus student organizations understood by students in Central Java include IPM, IQ UNS, PMII, HMI, FMBA (Arabic Language Student Forum), FORDIST (Forum for Discussion among Tarbiyah and Education Students), MSC (Muslim Smart Club), UKMI Nurul Ilmi, JQH al-Wustho, IMM, KAMMI, and Youth Mosque groups. Students' understanding of extra-campus organizations varied across several aspects. Many perceive these organizations as heavily involved in movement and political activities on campus. They are also familiar with Islamic organizations affiliated with Muhammadiyah, as well as Islamic spiritual organizations at UNS that focus on Quranic studies. Additionally, some organizations provide platforms for students to critique the government, while others focus on developing scientific studies and enhancing language skills in English and Arabic. There are also organizations that serve as platforms for Muslim students nationwide, promoting the *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* ideology. Furthermore, some groups emphasize Islam-oriented activities such as Islamic vocal groups, *rebana* (traditional drums), and calligraphy. Prominent student organizations such as PMII and IMM are well known, both affiliated with Indonesia's two largest Islamic organizations, NU and Muhammadiyah.

However, several drawbacks of Islamic-based extracurricular organizations lead some students to avoid them. First, some organizations do not effectively reflect Islamic values in their actions. Additionally, the available facilities are often inadequate, and there are concerns about teachings that may not fully align with Islamic principles. A lack of information about these organizations also contributes to low participation. Differences in ideology, the spread of extremist views or hate speech within some groups, and internal politics that undermine the credibility of leaders or members further discourage students from joining.

Students describe the characteristics of Islamic moderation developed on campus through several key aspects. First, it involves enhancing tolerance and addressing issues of intolerance. The concept of moderate Islam practiced on campus is one that does not differentiate between sects and maintains a positive relationship with local cultures. Flagship programs are designed to develop religious moderation, instill manners, and cultivate Islamic ethics among students. Another characteristic is the flexibility in practicing religion, with an emphasis on protecting the rights of all religious adherents to freely exercise their beliefs, thereby promoting tranquility and

welfare within religious communities. Islamic moderation also refrains from imposing any organization into a specific religious sect, fostering inclusivity. Additionally, tolerance towards all groups and the ability of Islam to adapt to contemporary developments are highlighted as core values. Finally, students emphasize the importance of maintaining true faith and properly practicing the pillars of Islam within this framework of moderation.

Factors driving student involvement in Islamic organizations include the desire to deepen religious knowledge, build social relationships, and develop leadership skills. However, some students avoid intra- and extra-campus organizations due to political reasons, lack of interest in activities deemed overly political, or academic and work commitments. The key factors also include a supportive environment and campus policies that accommodate Islamic moderation. However, hindrances such as students' misunderstanding of the ideologies of extra-campus organizations, inadequate facilities, and teachings considered inconsistent with Islamic principles affect students' participation in Islamic activities.

Cultural Identity and Islamic Moderation: Perspectives of Campus and Extra-Campus Organizations Activists

According to campus activists, Islamic traditions are inherited practices with Islamic nuances. These traditions are customs practiced within Islam, such as the month of Ramadan, the sacrifice of animals, and religious study groups. These traditions consist of rules or patterns of behavior related to Islamic law and are applied in daily life, having been practiced for a long time.

Socialization regarding Islamic traditional activities has not been widespread, as evidenced by the fact that some students are still unaware of these activities. Islamic traditions on campus include religious study groups, *zakat* (alms), *Halal bi Halal* (a traditional gathering after Eid), and the celebration of *Maulid Nabi* (the Prophet Muhammad's birthday). Activists join organizations for various reasons, such as deepening their Islamic knowledge, developing independence, and enhancing camaraderie. They are interested in *da'wah* (Islamic missionary work) and wish to build good relationships both within and outside the campus. Their understanding of the organizations they join includes two key aspects. First, they view them as movement organizations that focus on teaching religious matters. Second,

they recognize these organizations as operating beyond the campus, involving members from various universities and fostering a diverse membership base.

The differences between extra-campus organizations lie in their culture, number of members, and the programs they implement. Each organization has its strengths and weaknesses and strives to create a familial atmosphere and guide its members. The most influential or popular Islamic extra-campus organizations among students today are JQH, KAMMI, and PMII. The chairpersons of campus organizations are usually from extra-campus organizations like IMM and KAMMI. The majority of activists agree with Islamic moderation, except for AM, who believes that the acceptance of moderation depends on its context. All organizations the activists joined agree that the implementation of Islamic moderation is beneficial for both extra-campus and campus organizations. As for perspectives and analysis of organizations, campus activists see that each extra-campus organization has its strengths and weaknesses. Strengths can include a familial atmosphere, solid support, and a focus on *da'wah*, while weaknesses may involve internal politics and lack of coordination between organizations.

Organizations such as JQH, KAMMI, and PMII have a significant influence on the dissemination of Islamic moderation among students. Activists believe that the diversity of organizations helps accommodate various viewpoints and streams within Islam, but there is also criticism of some organizations that are perceived as not fully reflecting Islamic moderation. Activists generally support the implementation of Islamic moderation, though their views vary. They see moderation as a way to avoid extremism and promote tolerance, but they also acknowledge that definitions of moderation may differ. Discussions and activities such as seminars and dialogues between organizations are important tools for strengthening the understanding and implementation of Islamic moderation on campus.

Cultural Identity and Islamic Moderation: Campus Leadership's Perspective

The campus being studied reports that there are work programs or activities related to Islamic traditions, such as Muqoddaman and BIMA. The campus leadership also mentions that the organizations growing on their campus include PMII, HMI, IMM, BIMA, and LSO Harokatuna. A moderate stance is already included in the learning outcomes and curriculum of the campus. Factors driving the implementation of Islamic

moderation on campus include tolerance among students active in student organizations and the obligation to participate in moderation activities as part of the faculty's curriculum. The campus leadership does not record any obstructive factors and states that no lecturers or students are exposed to radicalism. The preventive measure taken by the campus is to provide advice to academic community members who show signs of radicalism.

For the implementation of Islamic moderation in campus work programs, moderation-based activities, the campus leadership notes that Islamic moderation activities on campus include Muqoddaman (as an introduction to religious programs) and BIMA (*Bilik Moderasi Islam dan Adab*). These activities reflect the campus' commitment to promoting Islamic moderation through programs specifically designed to strengthen the understanding and practice of moderation among the academic community. Religious moderation has been integrated into the curriculum and learning outcomes on campus, reflecting the leadership's effort to align moderation values with academic standards. This indicates that the campus leadership aims to ensure that Islamic moderation is not just an extracurricular activity but also a part of formal education.

Regarding the factors driving the implementation of religious moderation, tolerance among students active in student organizations and policies requiring moderation activities as part of the curriculum are the primary ones. These policies ensure that all students participate in moderation activities and receive education that supports the principles of religious moderation.

The campus leadership also considers that the non-discriminatory campus policies, along with support from the leadership, contribute to the successful implementation of Islamic moderation. This includes the establishment of places of worship for six recognized religions, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity and tolerance. Related to the management and prevention of radicalization through preventive approaches, the campus leadership adopts a preventive approach to address potential radicalization among the academic community. If there are indications of radicalization, measures taken include providing advice and implementing constructive interventions. This reflects the leadership's awareness and preparedness in maintaining a safe and inclusive academic environment.

The campus leadership is also involved in managing student organizations, both intra and extra-campus, to ensure that their activities align with the principles of Islamic moderation. This includes providing support and guidance to ensure that organizations function effectively and in accordance with the desired moderation goals. In the context of the cultural identity of Islamic moderation on campus, student organizations such as PMII, HMI, and IMM play a crucial role in promoting tolerance and moderation among students. Widiani et al. (2023, 141) emphasize that student organizations, when well-guided, can be catalysts for promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding, which is essential for countering radical ideologies.

This aligns with the research findings showing that the campus conducts work programs related to Islamic traditions, such as Muqoddaman and BIMA, as part of its commitment to strengthening the understanding of moderation. Ali (2020, 6) further argues that "cultural identity serves as a foundation for fostering religious moderation among students, enabling them to navigate differences constructively". Furthermore, Hilmin et al. (2023, 60) highlight the importance of integrating moderation values into the curriculum, stating that the inclusion of moderation values in educational programs fosters a sense of belonging and reduces susceptibility to radical ideologies among students. This indicates that the campus relies not only on extra-campus activities but also integrates moderation into formal education. This policy helps create an environment that supports tolerance among students active in organizations, where participation in moderation activities becomes part of the faculty's curriculum. Leadership styles also play a significant role in promoting student engagement in these programs, as Li et al. (2023,9) note that effective leadership is the key to fostering student involvement and commitment to moderation initiatives.

Regarding the management of potential radicalization, campus leadership adopts a preventive approach to address possible radicalization within the academic community. Supriadi et al. (2023, 235) emphasize that effective preventive measures, such as counselling and educational interventions, significantly mitigate the risks of radicalization among students. This reflects the leadership's awareness and preparedness to maintain a safe and inclusive academic environment. The leadership is also committed to managing student organizations to ensure their activities align with the principles of Islamic moderation.

However, challenges in implementing moderation are also faced, as ideological differences among student organizations often hinder effective collaboration. Sagap et al. (2020, 252) note that despite efforts to promote Islamic moderation, ideological differences within student organizations often hinder effective collaboration. Nevertheless, efforts to create non-discriminatory campus policies and support diversity, including providing places of worship for six recognized religions, demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity and tolerance, contributing to the successful implementation of moderation. Thus, this research provides a deeper understanding of campus strategies in combating radicalism and highlights the critical role of extra-campus organizations in promoting religious moderation.

Conclusion

Campuses in Central Java serve as platforms for fostering Islamic moderation through various traditions, religious moderation centers, and the inclusion of religious moderation in their curricula. These efforts, alongside interfaith tolerance programs, aim to resist radical groups while extra-campus organizations play a pivotal role in shaping tolerance and moderation among students and lecturers. However, radical influences from groups like *Salafi Jihadi*, *Ikhwanul Muslimin*, HTI, *Jamaah Islamiyah*, *Takfiri* groups, and ISIS have infiltrated some Islamic organizations, prompting higher education institutions to enforce strict policies and preventive measures against radicalism.

The cultural identity of Islamic moderation on these campuses is shaped by the perspectives of lecturers, students, and campus activists, with each group contributing to its development through teaching, organizational involvement, and activism. Campus leadership is vital in fostering this moderation by integrating it into curricula and policy. Despite challenges, these institutions have created an environment that supports diversity and tolerance. However, this study's limitation lies in its focus on Central Java, suggesting a need for further research in other Indonesian regions.

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