Actualization of Religious Moderation Values for Students at State Islamic University in Indonesia

Muhammad Sholeh

UIN Profesor Ki Haji Sadikuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

Corresponding Author: muhammadsholeh@uinsaizu.ac.id

Abstract: Indonesia is a pluralistic country and has much plurality. With this plural, it seems to be a “double-eyed” reality that we must be able to address correctly. On the one hand, diversity will have a positive value which will become a blessing and even a social force when we stick to the four pillars of national consensus, which contain the fundamental conception of the nation that can sustain the greatness, integrity, glory, and diversity of Indonesia. But at the same time, the existence of plurality and the reality of plurality can also have a negative value, provoking potential chaos and conflict between communities in Indonesia. Higher education is the last bastion of the nation’s children in obtaining formal education, so higher education has a vital role in instilling religious moderation so that an understanding will be formed that in the context of diversity, it is necessary to uphold good values to avoid intolerant, discriminatory behavior, not fanatically concerned with the interests of their group, and think extreme. Religious moderation in PTKI is to build mutual understanding from an early age between students with different religious beliefs to avoid sectarianism and be wise in acting and processing information.

Keywords: Actualization, Religious Moderation, State Islamic University
Introduction

Indonesia is known as one of the most diverse countries regarding ethnicity, religion, language, and culture. Evidenced by the nickname as a plural nation because it consists of various islands, ethnicities, religions, races, and languages. Each of them has a different cultural structure. The Indonesian government is multi-religious; each religion has various sects. Not to mention the plurality in ethnicity, race, and language, which all blend into one. The diversity in Indonesia is a destiny created based on His will. This makes diversity a necessity (natural law). It is believed to be a gift from God the Creator, not to be bargained for but to be accepted and cared for following the sunnatullah rhythm.

Indonesia’s diversity, which is so plural, seems to be a “double-eyed” reality that we must be able to address correctly. On the one hand, variety will have a positive value which will become a blessing and even a social force when we stick to the four pillars of national consensus, which contain the fundamental conception of the nation that can sustain the greatness, integrity, glory, and diversity of Indonesia. But at the same time, the existence of plurality and the reality of plurality can also have a negative value, provoking potential chaos and conflict between communities in Indonesia. Because it is undeniable, with the contestation of the diversity of existing cultural identities (including religions in them), differences of opinion, viewpoints, ethnic backgrounds, customs, and interests often cause friction both individually, in groups, and between groups, including in matters of religion in all society.

Today, Indonesia is being hit by a very serious problem that can potentially cause the nation’s disintegration, namely the massive attitude of viewing religious issues in the path of extreme currents (extreme right & extreme left) violence. The phenomenon of extremism that has emerged in our country can take the form of intolerance, radicalism, and terrorism, which has become a new trend in the religious landscape in Indonesia in the last two decades. From time to time, radicalism and intolerance problems tend to grow and penetrate various sectors, including students from elementary, middle, and high school to tertiary levels. One of the sectors affected by the infiltration of radicalism that we should be aware of is higher education institutions. Therefore, the leaders of higher education institutions must not ignore and take for granted the increasingly

threatening conditions. The problem becomes even more complicated and worrying when radicalism and intolerance infect students on campus. Even though they are the ones who will later carry out the mission of continuing the baton to realize the nation’s ideals.²

State Islamic University Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri is one of the PTKI in Central Java, precisely in the Banyumas district. Referring to the academic guidebook, State Islamic University Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri is committed to the Ministry of Religion’s program by becoming a laboratory for sowing religious moderation and human values. This has consistently integrated the vision, scientific paradigm, and learning paradigm of State Islamic University Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri. In addition, State Islamic University Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri officially launched the Religious Moderation House, which the Deputy Minister of Religion inaugurated.

**Religious Moderation**

Etymologically, moderation in Indonesian is an adaptation of the English word “moderation,” often used in the sense of average, core, standard, or non-aligned. Then referring to the Oxford Dictionary page, it means “moderation is the quality of being reasonable and not being extreme.” Moderation is understood as a condition that has the quality of a reasonable and not extreme state. Furthermore, this word is derived from the Latin “moderatio,” which means “something that is being (not excess and not lacking).”³

Muhammad bin Mandhur al-Afriqy al-Misry quoted by Abdul Gratitude in his book, explains moderation, namely:

وَسَطُ الشَّيْئِ مَابَيْنَ طَرْفِيْهِ

“Something that is (in the middle) between the two sides”

Many scholars provide explanations of moderation in line with the above understanding. Wahbah Zuhaili emphasized that moderation is positioned in the middle; this position means the best, just, chosen people, avoiding ifrat and

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³ Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama*, (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), hlm. 15
tafrit attitudes in religious and world affairs. Moderation displays a pattern, a form of teaching preached flexibly, kindly, and tolerantly, and opposes even rejecting the spread of radical and transgressive da’wah. Usually, such preaching is performed by extreme groups, be it the extreme left (liberalism) or the extreme right (radicalism). Burhani interprets “moderation as the midway between extreme-liberalism and extreme-Islamism.”

So what is meant by moderation in Burhani’s perspective is a middle way between the extremes of liberalism and the extremes of Islamism. Islamism, by some experts, is also called radicalism. Islamism/radicalism refers to the attitude of practicing Islam which is closed, rigid, and exclusive.

In Arabic, the equivalent of the word moderation is called Wasattiyyah. Wasattiyyah comes from the word wasatt, which means “equivalent to the words tawassutt (middle), i’tidal (fair), and tawazun (balanced).” Whatever words are used, they imply the same meaning, namely to be in the middle, “centrism.” People who carry out the quality of the Wasattiyyah principle get the nickname “referee,” which is then absorbed into Indonesian to become “referee.” Referee in Indonesian has three meanings, including 1) referee means intermediary, intermediary (for example, in matters of trade, business, etc.); 2) arbiter means arbiter or peacemaker between disputing parties; and 3) a referee means a leader in a match (such as a football referee, badminton referee, volleyball referee, and others). The whole meaning of the “referee” position must be in the middle, in the sense of making decisions according to the point of view in the middle. It means objective, not biased, right or left, and fair.

The Dimension of Religious Moderation

In practice, the output of religious moderation is an attitude, the practice of the middle way, and balance in life, including various aspects. The description

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4 Abdul Syukur dan Agus Hermanto, Konten Dakwah Era Digital (Dakwah Moderat), (Malang: CV. Literasi Nusantara, 2021), hlm. 3
6 Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, Moderasi ... hlm. 15
of religious moderation has been colored into various dimensions, starting from aqidah, sharia, morals, muamalah, and manhaj (method) of thinking.

Dimensions of Aqidah: In the science of aqidah (kalam science), religious moderation is represented by the theological school of ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama’ah al-asy’ariyah. The al-Asy’ariyah sect takes a moderate (middle) position between the Mu’tazilah schools, which are liberal in style, and the Hambali group-followers of ibn Hambal’s school of thought - who adhere to scripturalist views. Both streams are at extreme points. The Mu’tazilah are considered extreme because they deify reason, while the Hanbalis are considered extreme because they are textual-scriptualists.

The Sharia dimension: The Sharia dimension can be seen in a moderate (middle) position between certainty and legal flexibility. This means that Sharia requires that there are certain elements that cannot be changed (qat’i), and there are also parts that are tentative and can be changed. Laws related to usuluddin (fundamental principles) and maqasid (objectives) are firm in nature. At the same time, matters relating to the furu’iyyah area (branch sciences) are flexible. For example, in terms of prayer, the obligation to pray five times a day during Ramadan fasting is specific. But carrying out the prayer is flexible; some are wearing qunut, and others are not wearing qunut.

The Moral Dimension: The moderation relationship in the moral aspect has a balanced (moderate) character. This can be seen in the morals in social life; the attitude of moderation carried out is always oriented towards personal and collective benefit simultaneously. Individual interests do not sacrifice collective interests, nor vice versa. Collective interests do not sacrifice individual interests. However, if there is a dispute and it is impossible to reach a compromise agreement, the collective interest will take precedence.

The dimension of Manhaj thinking: The method (Manhaj) of moderate thinking, among others, is characterized by its ability to combine texts with ijtihad. This method can have a balanced (moderate) dialogue between the two,
not relying solely on nas, and at the same time not being too free with its ijtihad reasoning. This is in line with the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad regarding the appointment of Mu’adz ibn Jabal as a judge in Yemen. When a problem is not in the Qur’an and as-Sunnah, a judge may make ijtihad to decide a case with the record that a mujtahid must understand matters of religious discipline.

Da’wah Dimension: Da’wah or religious propagation, which is emphasized in moderation, cannot be separated from the principles of religious teachings which uphold human values, namely not insulting, damaging public facilities, violence physically injuring, and other anarchic acts. As a follower of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who received the title of the best ummah, the mission that must be carried out is to give good orders (ma’ruf) and prevent evil (munkar).

Indicator of Religious Moderation Values

The Ministry of Religion provides a guideline to identify an individual or group classified as moderate. With these signs later, all components of society will realize the attitude of religious moderation in the framework of diversity, national and state life. The values of religious moderation include: Tawassut (in the middle), I’tidal (fair, upright), Tasamuh (tolerance), Shura (deliberation), Islah (improvement), Qudwah (exemplary), Muwatanah (love of water), La ‘Unf (non-violence), I’tiraf al-‘Urf (culturally friendly, local traditions).

Tawassut (in the middle)

Literally, tawassut means an attitude that chooses a middle way between ifrat (too much/excessive) and tafrit (too free/too easy). This middle attitude is core to the principle of life, which upholds the necessity to act pretty and straightly in life together. The value of tawassut has an essential position because it will affect the perspective (cognitive), nature (affective), and practice (psychomotor) in living life.

12 Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, Moderasi ... hlm. 28.
13 Khoirul Anwar, Berislam Secara Moderat, (Semarang: CV Lawwana, 2021), hlm. 222.
I’tidal (Perpendicular / Fair)

Justice is a central idea in managing human relations. This idea is not only taught by Islam alone but is taught in all religions, beliefs, and social traditions. I’tidal (fair) means “to put something in its place, and exercise rights and fulfill obligations proportionally.” Edi AH quoted Husein explaining that justice is God’s order that humans must uphold for the sake of humans themselves. This value makes it important because it is part of the vision of religion that humans must realize in their capacities as individuals, families, communities, and the administration of the state.

Tasamuh (tolerance)

Etymologically, tasamuh has many forms of derivation, such as Samah, samahah, and musamahah; these words are identified with the meaning of generosity, forgiveness, convenience, and peace. Tasamuh recognizes and respects differences in all aspects of life, religious, ethnic, racial, customary, and other. Prof. Quraish Shihab added that tolerance is an attitude of allowing, being tolerant, and respecting the opinions/attitudes of other parties even though they disagree. The absolute requirement for tolerance is mutual understanding among people. The attitude of tasamuh will provide space for other people to practice their beliefs and express their opinions freely.

Shura (Deliberation)

Shura is an activity to find meeting points for various existing problems by sitting together to reach a consensus on mutual benefit. The shura mechanism is based on dialogue, exchanging ideas with others in making decisions. Regarding the context of religious moderation, shura forums are classified as moderate in character because they politely convey opinions without imposing their will and blaming other people’s opinions. The intended agreement is not related to unilateral victory but is based on mutual understanding. The characteristics of

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shura include explaining to each other, negotiating, exchanging opinions about a word, not imposing personal opinions, and being respectful and complying with joint decisions.\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{Islah} (Repair)

Islah is an attitude, reformative and constructive action to bring about a better situation (public benefit) by following the current developments of the times but still adhering to the principles of \textit{al-muhafazah ‘ala al-qadimi al-shalih wa al-akhz\textsuperscript{21} du bi al-jadid al-ashlah} (maintaining good old traditions/thoughts and adopting something new that is better) and efforts to create peace.\textsuperscript{22} Islah makes an attitude to make improvements and changes in a better direction with an important step that is considered, namely prioritizing the common interest. Then, the manifestation of the value of \textit{Islah} will maintain harmony and promote peace.

\textit{Qudwah} (Exemplary)

The term \textit{qudwah} is labeled as a role model or pioneer as an initiator of goodness to benefit human life (common good and well-being).\textsuperscript{23} When the \textit{qudwah} character is applied at a personal and even communal level, one day, a leader who can build his community towards a safe, peaceful, happy, and prosperous life will be created. In community social activities, a person/group can be said to have adopted a moderate attitude when it has become an example in carrying out the values of justice and humanity.\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{Muwatanah} (Love of the Motherland)

\textit{Muwatanah} is an attitude of recognition of the existence of a nation-state; with this understanding, it will make love for the motherland (nationalism) timeless.\textsuperscript{25} In the Indonesian context, the determination to become a form of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{22} Muhammad Quraish Shihab, \textit{Kosakata Keagamaan}, (Tangerang Selatan: Lentera Hati, 2020), hlm. 394.
\textsuperscript{23} Enos Sufrudien dan Rizaldi Luthfi, \textit{Moderasi Beragama dan Bernegara …} hlm. 29.
\textsuperscript{24} Abdul Aziz dan A. Khoirul Anam, \textit{Moderasi Beragama …}, hlm. 54.
\textsuperscript{25} Niswah Qonitah dkk, “Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Islam dalam Tradisi Pesantren pada
\end{footnotesize}
nation-state religion is considered very appropriate because the relationship between Religion and the State is intertwined; religion is understood to provide “deep spirituality,” while the State guarantees “the space for life and the continuity of the religion of its citizens freely.” Indonesianness, muwatanah is proven by recognizing four national consensuses; Pancasila as the state ideology, loyal to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, the 1945 Constitution, and leading a life guided by Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Diverse but One).

La ‘Unf (Nonviolence)

Friendly, polite, peaceful religious teachings have recently been tarnished by a handful of individuals who present spiritual education in a rigid, violent, disorderly, and sporadic manner. As a result, the face of the Islamic religion that appears on the public surface seems to be haunted and sinister. In fact, often, his anarchist actions use the legitimacy of the Koran and Hadith arguments to win the ummah’s sympathy. Nonviolence is an expression of love as a solution to end any attitude or act of violence. Extremism in religion occurs due to the harmful access it generates, with too excessive fanaticism that eventually forces the will on other people, which then crashes into agreed norms in a society. Non-violent character traits in religious moderation will display a friendly attitude, help, gentleness, peace, and compassion.

I’tiraf al-Urf (Cultural Friendly, Local Traditions)

Culturally friendly values accommodative towards local culture (al-mustaw’ib ‘ala-al-saqafah al-mahalliyyah), meaning that the attitude of appreciation or acceptance of elements of local culture and traditions as long as they do not conflict with the principles of religious teachings, that is, do not conflict with the concept of monotheism, prophecy, and humanity. Nevertheless, religion and culture cannot be in an equal position because, in essence, Islam is absolute, while culture (‘Urf) is the result of human creation. Nonetheless, the relationship between the two has been united in people’s lives. For example, a


27 Abdul Aziz dan A. Khoirul Anam, Moderasi Beragama … hlm. 62.
form of moderation in religion and culture in terms of places of worship, for example, making a mosque or prayer room with any important architecture a sacred place. The important point of moderation that is culturally friendly local traditions is to respect and value local culture and traditions, not to insult or belittle other communities' culture.

Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI)

Religious moderation is at the forefront of discourse nowadays, both nationally and globally. This is due to the growth of intolerance, and extremist anarchism, which is increasingly spreading to various sectors, including higher education. The campus is considered a very strategic path used to extend the seeds of the movement. This development should be carried out in an appropriate step-by-step analysis. Because extremism stems from inaccurate religious knowledge (close-minded), reforming religious moderation in education (open-minded) is the best solution.

The State Islamic Religious College (PTKI) has now been mandated to contribute to disseminating religious moderation. Religious moderation is a term created from a sense of concern and anxiety from government institutions – the Ministry of Religion – as well as adherents of religion towards the reality that is happening, namely attitudes and practices in religion that are excessive (al-ghuluww) / extreme. A religious view is “black and white,” strict, and rigid, accompanied by fanaticism that leads to intolerance and radicalism in carrying out spiritual teachings. Some groups practice religion, which is too free in using ratios. As a result, they often ignore Divine texts.

The Ministry of Religion, through the Directorate General, issues a Circular Letter of the Directorate General of Islamic Education of the Ministry of Religion No. B-3663.1/Dj.I/ BA.02/10/2019 then refined No. B-717.2/DJ.I/Dt.I.III./ HM.01/03/2021 The letter’s contents explained that PTKI must participate in the narrative campaign of religious moderation. The Directorate General ordered PTKI to establish a House of Religious Moderation (RMB) to become a locomotive for the movement for attitudes to carry out religious teachings that are soothing, tolerant, humanist, peaceful, and rahmatan lil ‘alamin to

28 Khoirul Anwar, Berislam ... hlm. 111.
create a “civilized” spiritual environment. Until now, the House of Moderation of Religion (RMB) has been recorded as having been launched by 32 Islamic Religious Colleges throughout Indonesia\(^{30}\) including the House of Religious Moderation of UIN Saizu Purwokerto. This number is sure to continue to grow, bearing in mind the hopes that are carried for PTKI so that they can become qudwah hasanah in mainstreaming (mainstreaming) religious moderation.

The Urgency of Religious Moderation in PTKI

Islamic Religious Higher Education has a distinctive feature compared to other tertiary institutions, namely being a center for Islamic studies, so it has excellent potential for the success of religious moderation. Therefore, PTKI must carry out its capacity to disseminate understanding and practice that reflects *Islam rahmatan li al-'alamin*, tolerant, open, and peaceful in building religious harmony. This was confirmed by Lukman Hakim, who labeled PTKI as having the authority to counter extremism narratives.\(^{31}\)

Higher education is the last bastion of the nation’s children in obtaining formal education, so higher education has a vital role in instilling religious moderation so that an understanding will be formed that in the context of diversity, it is necessary to uphold good values to avoid intolerant, discriminatory behavior, not fanatically concerned with the interests of their group, Serti thinks extreme.

Religious moderation in PTKI is to build mutual understanding from an early age between students with different religious beliefs to avoid sectarianism and be wise in acting and processing information. In the end, human character and morals are formed that are humane, peaceful, compassionate, and tolerant in the future to become a dignified national civilization. This inclusive and critical intellectual reasoning is a significant force in strengthening easy academic traditions.


\(^{31}\) Nur Syam dkk, *Spirit Moderasi Beragama Ucapan & Tindakan Lukman Hakim Saifuddin*, (Jakarta: Sekretariat Jenderal Kementerian Agama, 2018), hlm. 81
PTKI Challenges in the Development of Religious Moderation

Until now, PTKI’s tasks are still facing very complex challenges, challenges that are in the spotlight today, namely the challenges of modernity which are full of negative currents, symptoms of extremism, the development of subjective truth claims, and coercion of religious interpretations, the development of excessive (extreme) religious perspectives, attitudes and practices that set aside human dignity, the result of a holy spirit that is inconsistent with the love of the nation within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. On the other hand, advances in internet technology (social media) have become a catalyst for radicalism and extremist groups because they gain significant benefits. They can recruit, train, find, and expand their network through digital technology to attract public sympathizers. These groups play framing in the media. Most of the shows are outside the character of religious moderation. Many uploads are twisted to create insults in the name of religion, agitation, truth claims, hate speech, and bullying, fill various social media, and are consumed naked & freely. Therefore it will give birth to an exclusive attitude to the audience.32

Actualization of Religious Moderation Values for UIN Students
Profesor Kiai Haji Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

Based on the research that the author did. Thus, the authors conclude that the values of religious moderation have been actualized by students of UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto in all his activities and activities. This will be valuable capital when plunged into alumni participating in the community later. The student’s religious moderation is contained in the values of religious moderation as follows;

1) Tawassut (in the middle) in the form of students not quickly blaming and forcing the truth according to themselves; there are no students who have extreme views, for example, in addressing the background of the student organizations they join, social organizations they enter, and even Islamic boarding schools that become residence;

2) *I’tidal* (fair) in the form of gender justice (women or men can become chairmen/leaders), students are always able to place things in their place proportionally both in organizing and in attending lectures (criticizing), as well as fairness from lecturers;

3) *Tasamuh* in the form of each student does not show a fanatical attitude towards one school of thought and respects each other; students also appreciate people from different socio-cultural backgrounds;

4) *Syura* is always carried out by students of UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto during organizational meetings, for example, changing leadership, drafting new work programs, boarding houses forums, and discussing differences in religious teachings;

5) *Islah* is a student of UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto consistently innovates (thumb jihad, backup school) and becomes a mediator in peace;

6) *Qudwah* (exemplary) in the form of UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto always provides examples of friendly attitude, clothing, manners, likes to read books, write articles/essays;

7) *Muwatanah* (love for water) of UIN students Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto was expressed by singing the national anthem *Indonesia Raya, Syubbanul Wathan* in all activities, then committed to the four national consensuses, as well as the spirit of hubbul wathan minal faith;

8) *La ‘Unf* (Nonviolence) in the form of UIN Prof. students. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto always acts wisely and avoids violence (both verbal and non-verbal violence);

9) *I’tiraf al-’Urf* (culturally friendly, local tradition) in the form of a UIN student Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto carries out anjangsana culture, *halal bi halal, panginyongan culture, sholawatan, tahlilan, yasinan* and so on.

**Conclusion**

Religious moderation is a value that can explain one of the essences of religion, namely about moderation or the middle way. This research is expected to be a reference for parties interested in knowing what religious moderation is, especially in higher education institutions. The complexity of Indonesian society’s spiritual life, which is plural and multicultural, has triggered the birth of a very complex religious phenomenon. On the one hand, there are extreme
liberals; on the other, there are extreme conservatives in spiritual practices. If no counter-narrative of moderation is mainstreamed, then conservatism, extremism, and liberalism in religion can be considered as values that are considered valid, even though these things have damaged religious values themselves.

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