

Religion, State, and the Campus: Religious Moderation in the Context of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia

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Abstract:

This article examines campus-level understandings and attitudes toward religious moderation by drawing on data from students and academic representatives at three State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri/PTKIN*) in Indonesia: Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN Sumatera Utara, and Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Manado. These three PTKIN were selected because they represent different regions of Indonesia and therefore provide a comparative perspective on how campuses conceptualize and implement religious moderation. This study adopts a qualitative paradigm as its primary analytical framework while also employing survey techniques that require quantitative analysis of field data. Accordingly, the research utilizes a mixed-methods approach. The analytical perspective is grounded in state ideology and education policy frameworks, which are further supported by data obtained through interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis. The article also explores the potential, opportunities, and challenges involved in strengthening religious moderation among students. The findings indicate that the majority of new students participating in the *Pengenalan Budaya Akademik dan Kemahasiswaan (PBAK)* program remain within a moderate category and demonstrate significant potential to be guided toward understandings, attitudes, and behaviors that align with national policies on religious moderation. The expected contribution of this study is to provide empirical input and comparative data for policymakers, particularly within PTKIN, to support the development of more effective, systematic, and strategic approaches to the socialization and implementation of religious moderation in higher education.

Abstrak:

Artikel ini menjelaskan tentang pemahaman dan sikap kampus terhadap moderasi beragama dengan mengambil sampel para mahasiswa dan perwakilan akademik dari tiga Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri (PTKIN) di Indonesia: Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN Sumatera Utara, dan Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Manado. Pemilihan tiga kampus PTKIN ini didasarkan pada alasan bahwa ketiganya menjadi representasi dari tiga wilayah Indonesia yang, secara umum, bisa mendeskripsikan keberadaan kampus dalam memahami moderasi beragama. Penelitian ini menerapkan paradigma kualitatif sebagai referensi utamanya, tetapi juga menggunakan metode survei yang membutuhkan perhitungan kuantitatif dari data lapangan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian campuran. Sedangkan pendekatan

studi yang digunakan mengacu pada “kebijakan ideologi negara” dan “kebijakan politik pendidikan” yang diperkuat dengan wawancara, FGD (focus group discussion), dan dokumentasi. Kampus menjadi bagian penting dari kebijakan pemerintah dalam upaya membangun moderasi beragama di kalangan mahasiswa. Artikel ini juga menjelaskan adanya potensi, peluang, dan tantangan terkait penguatan moderasi beragama di kalangan mahasiswa. Hasil sementara menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa baru yang mengikuti pelaksanaan PBAK tersebut, masih dalam kategori moderat dan berpotensi untuk terus dibina dan diarahkan pada pemahaman, sikap, dan perilaku yang sesuai dengan kebijakan pemerintah. Hasil yang diharapkan dari penelitian ini adalah diperolehnya beberapa masukan dan data banding bagi para pengambil kebijakan, khususnya di lingkungan PTKIN, agar sosialisasi moderasi beragama bisa diselenggarakan lebih baik, sistemik, dan strategis.

Keywords:

Anti-Radicalism, Educational Political Policies, Religious Moderation, PTKIN

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Introduction

Religious moderation, which in Arabic is referred to as *al-tadayyun al-wasaṭī* (التدين الواسطي) or *al-i'tidāl al-dīnī* (الديني الاعتدال), is not only essential for the religious life of believers but also for humanity at large, as it reflects and actualizes the universal values of faith. This principle is grounded in the universal message of the Qur'an, particularly in Surah al-Baqarah [2]:143, which emphasizes the importance of forming a *wasāṭan* (وسطاً), a moderate and balanced community, in interactions among human beings. This Qur'anic injunction serves as a foundational basis for the concept of religious moderation. Similarly, several authentic hadiths indicate that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of practicing religion through attitudes that are open to truth (*al-ḥanīfiyyah*) and tolerant toward others (*al-samḥah*). At the same time, the Prophet cautioned against excessiveness or harshness (*al-ghulūw*) in religious practice. Conceptually, moderation is closely associated with related terms such as *tawāzun* (balance), *tawassuṭ* (middle positioning), *i'tidāl* (uprightness), and *iqtisād* (proportionality). Conversely, its antonyms include *taṭarruf* (extremism), *mughālah* (exaggeration), *tafrīt* (negligence), and *isrāf* (excess) (Hashim Kamali & Ramadan, 2015).

Religious moderation thus constitutes a crucial element in maintaining equilibrium within religious, national, and social life. In the absence of moderation, extremist and radical ideologies may emerge and evolve into politico-religious movements that threaten social cohesion and public order. Ramadan (2012) argues that Muslim moderation is closely linked to patterns of religious practice, internal diversity within Islam, and differing Muslim perceptions of the “West.” In this regard, moderation is sometimes juxtaposed with Islamic fundamentalism, which, as noted by Engineer Ali (2003), is often more a product of political dynamics than of religious doctrine itself. Moreover, religious moderation is closely related to the discourse on multiculturalism. From Charles Taylor’s perspective, multiculturalism demands the recognition of differences, whether religious, political, ideological, or related to minority identities, as a prerequisite for social harmony (Burga & Damopolii, 2022). This recognition aligns with the broader aims of religious moderation in plural societies. At the same time, religious moderation is frequently positioned in opposition to religious extremism, a phenomenon that requires critical and contextual examination. The emergence of both extremism and moderation cannot be understood solely in theological terms but must also be analyzed in relation to external factors such as greed, hatred, fear, and competition over political ideologies. Sam Harris (2005) proposes at least two hypotheses concerning the rise of religious extremism and moderation: the role of religious belief itself and the influence of inherent aspects of human nature.

Furthermore, the application of religious moderation is often shaped by the historical experiences of communities within the life of the nation-state, where religious adherents continuously negotiate the relationship between doctrinal teachings and lived social realities. In this context, Rezaei (2020) highlights the challenge of maintaining Islamic beliefs as a religious system while simultaneously engaging with the ideas and practices of modernity faced by contemporary Muslim societies. In the Indonesian context, the implementation of religious moderation is evident in various initiatives undertaken by the government, religious leaders, and advocates of religious moderation. Indonesia’s position as one of the countries with the largest Muslim populations in the world is closely intertwined with political dynamics and global policy considerations. Citing a statement by former Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, John Hughes argues that the integration of democracy, Islam, and modernity plays a constructive role in mitigating terrorism. Accordingly, several key factors must be considered in fostering religious moderation, including the promotion of interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue, as well as the cultivation of tolerant and moderate attitudes from an early age (Hughes, 2010).

Equally important is the role of religious leaders and influential figures in instilling moderate religious values and in preventing or containing the spread of extremism. Indonesia remains among the countries facing significant threats from extremist and terrorist groups. According to the Global Terrorism Index (2020), Indonesia ranks 24th out of 163 countries in terms of exposure to terrorism, with a score of 5.5, placing it within the medium-impact category. This empirical data underscores the urgency of preventive efforts and highlights the strategic role of educational institutions, particularly

universities, as spaces for nurturing critical thinking, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. Campuses, as centers of knowledge production and character formation, bear a moral and social responsibility to equip students with values that contribute to a just, peaceful, and nonviolent social order. Indonesia's exceptionally high level of diversity, encompassing religion, language, culture, ethnicity, and customs, presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, such diversity constitutes a valuable social asset that enriches national identity; on the other hand, if it is not carefully managed and sustained, it may become counterproductive and give rise to social tensions and conflict. In this regard, religious moderation serves as a crucial framework for maintaining social cohesion within a pluralistic society.

As previously noted, this study was conducted across three higher education institutions in Indonesia and involved both student and academic representatives. This focus addresses a relatively underexplored area of research, particularly with respect to students' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in practicing religious life on campus. Moreover, the *Pengenalan Budaya Akademik dan Kemahasiswaan* (PBAK), an annual orientation program for new students at institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, provides a strategic platform for examining students' initial religious orientations and their potential development toward moderate perspectives. The selection of these campuses was also informed by their role in shaping the younger generation of Muslims, who represent the foundation of Indonesia's future. Ultimately, this research aims to generate insights, recommendations, and comparative data for policymakers, thereby supporting the systematic and strategic implementation of religious moderation initiatives within higher education institutions.

Research Method

The primary methodological paradigm adopted in this study is qualitative research, which is characterized by positioning humans as the main research instruments, employing a grounded theory orientation, and producing descriptive data (Moleong & Lexy, 2001). Although qualitative inquiry constitutes the principal approach, this study also incorporates survey techniques that involve quantitative data processing. Accordingly, the research applies a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative elements to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. In terms of research typology, this study is situated within the field of public policy analysis, particularly focusing on: (1) state ideological policy and (2) educational political policy. The scope of the research encompasses academic activities and the implementation of the *Pengenalan Budaya Akademik dan Kemahasiswaan* (PBAK), an annual orientation program for new students conducted at three State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri/PTKIN*), namely Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN Sumatera Utara, and Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Manado. The analytical focus of the study includes: (1) policy problem formulation, (2) policy implementation, and (3) policy evaluation within the context of religious moderation on campus.

Data sources and data collection techniques comprised: (1) in-depth interviews and (2) focus group discussions (FGDs). These methods were employed to obtain a detailed and comprehensive depiction of academic activities and the implementation of PBAK across the three PTKINs. Open-ended, in-depth interviews were conducted with student participants, with a minimum sample of 10% of the total number of students involved in the PBAK program at each institution, as detailed in the field findings. In addition, FGDs were conducted both online and offline with participants who possessed relevant expertise, experience, and interest in the research topic, including academic staff and institutional stakeholders. Then, the collected data were systematically processed and analyzed by the researchers. The data management process involved organizing, categorizing, typologizing, and editing the data to ensure consistency and accuracy. Data analysis was carried out using qualitative descriptive techniques, supported by quantitative elements such as frequency tables. The analysis drew on multiple data sources, including interview transcripts, FGD records, field notes, documentation, and survey results. This integrative approach aimed to identify key issues emerging from the data, generate an in-depth and holistic understanding of the research context, and either confirm existing theoretical frameworks or contribute to the development of new conceptual insights. This research was conducted at three PTKIN campuses under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, located in Jakarta, North Sumatra, and Manado. The selection of these research sites was based on several considerations: (1) geographic and geopolitical diversity, (2) religious and cultural plurality, and (3) regional representation across western, central, and eastern parts of Indonesia. These factors were deemed essential to capturing varied campus experiences and perspectives regarding the implementation of religious moderation policies in higher education.

Results and Discussion

Pillars of State Ideology: Dynamics and Challenges

The pillars of state ideology are essential to discuss because they serve as the primary framework for understanding the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of students participating in the *Pengenalan Budaya Akademik dan Kemahasiswaan* (PBAK), as evidenced by the field data. As educational institutions and open academic spaces, universities are inherently exposed to diverse religious beliefs and ideological movements that exist within Indonesian society. Consequently, campuses, particularly those operating under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, are required to align with government-established policies to ensure adherence to the fundamental pillars of state ideology, namely Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution (*Undang-Undang Dasar 1945*), *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia / NKRI*). For this reason, an introductory and contextualized understanding of state ideology remains both crucial and relevant in higher education.

The state occupies a central and strategic position in shaping national and state life. Accordingly, the government, through its three primary branches of power (executive,

legislative, and judicial), bears the responsibility for formulating, implementing, and reinforcing state ideology, as well as the policies and regulations derived from it. These responsibilities are intended to ensure that state ideology functions effectively and efficiently as a guiding framework for governance and social order. Inevitably, state ideology policies may come into direct interaction (*vis-à-vis*) with non-state actors, including civil society organizations, socio-religious institutions, and socio-political movements. In such circumstances, the state, represented by the government, must position itself as a protector of its citizens while maintaining ideological coherence and social stability.

In the Indonesian context, the establishment of Pancasila as the foundational ideology of the state was the result of a complex historical and political process. Sukarno, one of the most influential national leaders and the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, had earlier introduced the concept of Nasakom (Nationalism, Islam, and Communism) in the newspaper *Soeloeh Indonesia Moeda* in 1926, reflecting early efforts to reconcile ideological diversity within the nationalist movement (Ryadi, 2022). During the struggle for independence, national leaders and freedom fighters engaged in extensive debates and discourses concerning the philosophical and ideological foundations of the state. Following a series of deliberations and compromises, Pancasila was formally ratified at the session of the Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (PPKI) on August 18, 1945. At this historic meeting, it was agreed that Pancasila would be enshrined in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, thereby establishing it as the legal and philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state (Hari Lahir Pancasila: Sejarah dan Maknanya, 2022).

Following the end of the Old Order under President Sukarno's leadership, Indonesia entered a new phase of governance under President Suharto. Through what became known as the New Order era, Suharto served as one of the longest-serving presidents in Indonesian history, having been inaugurated on March 27, 1968, and remaining in office until his resignation on May 21, 1998 (Direktori Penyelenggaraan Pemilu – Situs Web Kepustakaan Presiden-Presiden Republik Indonesia, 1999). During the New Order period, President Suharto exercised centralized and largely authoritarian control, particularly in regulating political dynamics. As a result, state ideological policies were implemented with minimal resistance or disruption. To a considerable extent, the state possessed enhanced authority during this era due to its control over surplus resources and its direct involvement in economic development. This concentration of power enabled the government to regulate not only economic processes but also ideological interpretation. The New Order regime actively sought to shape public understanding of Pancasila as the foundational state ideology through systematic indoctrination programs, most notably the *Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila (P4)*, which aimed to produce a uniform ideological orientation among citizens (Kleden, 2004).

In subsequent developments, President Suharto increasingly recognized the strategic position and influence of religious leaders, particularly within the Muslim community, prompting efforts to cultivate more harmonious relations between the state and religious groups. At the same time, the New Order government continued to

emphasize the centrality of Pancasila as the state ideology that must be upheld and accepted by all elements of the nation, especially political elites and leaders. Regarding the relationship between Pancasila and religion, particularly Islam as the majority religion, Ken Ward, in his discussion of “Suharto’s Javanese Pancasila,” notes that President Suharto explicitly assured Islamic scholars (ulama) that Indonesian citizens were free to practice their respective religions and that the state had no intention of replacing religion with Pancasila (Aspinall & Fealy, 1957). These policies and statements signaled the recognition of socio-religious organizations as essential and strategic partners in safeguarding and sustaining Pancasila as the ideological foundation of the state. Measures such as the dissemination of P4 formed part of the New Order government’s tactical and strategic approach, which, at least for a significant period, succeeded in maintaining socio-political stability in Indonesia.

In addition to Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution (Undang-Undang Dasar 1945) constitutes what Jimly Asshiddiqie describes as the supreme law of the land. Together, Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution provide the fundamental normative and philosophical directions for state policy at a highly abstract and conceptual level. Within this framework, there are at least four pillars of Indonesian nationality, as affirmed through the decisions and stipulations of the People’s Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat/MPR*): Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia/NKRI*), and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) (Jimly, 2006). At a more practical level, the internalization of the values embodied in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution is essential for safeguarding ideological integrity, maintaining national unity and territorial integrity, and fostering religious tolerance grounded in justice and civility. In this regard, Novita Siswayanti argues that the relationship between religion and the state in Indonesia must be constructed on a symbiotic and mutually beneficial basis. She also critically addresses the emergence of groups advocating the “formalization” of Islamic law, often by invoking the Jakarta Charter. Such movements are frequently aligned with what she terms “extreme right” groups, which seek to replace Pancasila with Islamic legal principles through the establishment of a caliphate-based system of governance. Conversely, there are also “extreme left” groups that promote the transformation of Indonesia into a secular state based on Marxist ideology (Siswayanti, 2013).

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and NKRI represent additional pillars of national identity that must be continuously preserved and protected. These pillars have increasingly faced challenges arising from transnational religious and ideological discourses, including concepts such as *khilāfah*, *jihād*, *sharī’a*, and the notion of an Islamic state. Legally, these pillars have been reaffirmed as permanently binding within Indonesia’s constitutional framework. The Reformasi era, following the collapse of the New Order regime, provided greater political openness that allowed various social organizations and religious ideologies to gain momentum. During this period, a number of puritanical, scripturalist, radical, and revolutionary groups emerged. These include Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI); the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (*Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia/MMI*), established by Abu

Bakar Ba'asyir in August 2000; Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, founded by Ja'far Umar Thalib; Jamaah Islamiyah (JI); Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT); and Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD). Several of these organizations have been identified as having ideological or operational links to international terrorist networks, such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Meanwhile, a student organization often identified as being affiliated with and serving as a social base for Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) is the Indonesian Muslim Students Action Union (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia/KAMMI*). KAMMI's activities are primarily conducted through the halaqah model on various university campuses. Siti Kholifah, drawing on several sources, argues that the post-New Order period was characterized by democratization and weakened state control, which created opportunities for puritanical and radical groups to disseminate their agendas in Indonesia. Among these groups were Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam/FPI*), the Indonesian Da'wah Council (*Majelis Dakwah Indonesia/MDI*), and KAMMI. These organizations sought to promote a comprehensive implementation of Islamic law (sharī'a) in Indonesia (Slamet, 2014). Issues related to nationalism remain inherently dynamic, particularly in the context of increasingly open and expansive information flows. As a multicultural nation characterized by ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, Indonesia faces complex challenges that must be addressed wisely, carefully, and strategically. The four pillars of national life, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), must therefore be continuously upheld to sustain a national order grounded in character, cohesion, and dignity within the global community. These four pillars serve as fundamental benchmarks for Indonesia's future nation-building.

Nevertheless, one of the state's most pressing challenges lies in responding to religious groups and organizations that espouse extreme or radical views, particularly those advocating the enforcement of shari'a and promoting the rhetoric of jihad. Such groups often employ what has been described as a "chameleon strategy," whereby they obscure their ideological objectives by invoking discourses of human rights, constitutionalism, and freedom of expression, despite the state's explicit rejection of their core agendas. In this sense, these movements exhibit a combination of ideological continuity, reflected in their firm adherence to long-standing doctrines, and strategic adaptation, manifested in modified identities and new modes of engagement. Through these strategies, they seek to assert claims to citizenship and legitimacy within the state framework (Hiariej, 2017).

The imperative to preserve and strengthen Indonesia's foundational pillars, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and NKRI, derives not only from their historical significance and the sacrifices made by national figures in their establishment, but also from the enduring relevance of the values they embody. These values are deeply aligned with the pluralistic realities of Indonesian society, encompassing diverse religious traditions, cultures, customs, and social practices. In an era marked by intensified global communication and the rapid circulation of information, these four

pillars will likely confront increasingly complex and demanding challenges. Consequently, sustained efforts to reinforce their normative and practical relevance remain essential for maintaining national unity, social harmony, and democratic resilience.

Educational Political Policy

Educational institutions play a central role in shaping the future generation of a nation. The level of a country's progress or decline is closely linked to the quality and advancement of its educational system. In this regard, the state, represented by the government, bears primary responsibility for formulating and implementing policies aimed at advancing education. Government education policies are influenced by several key considerations. First, the state has an interest in preserving and reinforcing state ideology through educational institutions. Second, education policy serves as a mechanism for maintaining political stability by regulating, guiding, and supervising students' attitudes and behaviors, including those of the *civitas academica* within campus environments. Third, education policy is closely related to the allocation of the state budget for the education sector. Fourth, education constitutes one of the most critical long-term social investments, particularly in relation to the development of human and natural resources. Finally, education functions as a means of preserving the nation's foundational values as an integral component of national identity.

As one of the most diverse countries in the world in terms of religion, language, culture, and customs, Indonesia faces a pressing need to formulate educational and political policies that are both constructive and inclusive. Nearly every dimension of this diversity has implications for educational policy-making. Indonesia's multicultural context, for instance, significantly influences political education policies. Language diversity provides a clear example, as Indonesia is home to approximately 706 local languages. Through Law Number 20 of 2003, the government formally accommodates local and regional languages by allowing their inclusion as part of local content curricula, thereby recognizing mother tongues within the national education system (McCarty & May, 1997). To effectively manage this diversity, the government must develop integrative and synergistic educational policies capable of guiding younger generations toward a more inclusive and sustainable future. Political education policies must therefore be grounded in the four national pillars, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), which collectively embody the principles of ideology, constitutionalism, nationality, and unity. These pillars provide a normative framework for instilling values of moderation, tolerance, and national character within the Indonesian education system (Slamet, 2014).

In the formulation of educational political policies, the role of government institutions is both essential and strategic, as they function as key organs of the state. Educational institutions, in turn, serve as mediating spaces for strengthening the ideological vision of the state. Various ministries are therefore expected to contribute to the creation of a social order characterized by understandings, attitudes, and behaviors aligned with the nation's ideological foundations. One of the government's major strategic initiatives in this regard is the "Indonesia Vision 2045," which places significant emphasis

on investment in educational development. Within this framework, the Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional/Bappenas*) plays a crucial role in integrating education as a central pillar of long-term national development.

In the context of campus life and student affairs, one of the government's key responsibilities is to maintain and cultivate the values of religious moderation in everyday practices. These values are considered essential for several reasons. First, fostering moderate mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors across various dimensions of social life is closely aligned with Indonesia's Vision 2045. The Executive Summary issued by the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas emphasizes the realization of the vision of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia under the leadership of President Joko Widodo, which includes the aspiration to build an Indonesian society that upholds pluralism, is culturally grounded, religious, and committed to ethical values (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2019). Second, the younger generation, most of whom are currently engaged in higher education, constitutes the group with the greatest potential to implement and sustain future government policy agendas. Within the framework of political education policy, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia bears responsibility for implementing the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020–2024. This plan mandates the Ministry to undertake concrete and strategic measures to promote and institutionalize religious moderation as a mainstream approach to religious life in Indonesia (Kementerian Agama RI, 2021). Third, over the past two years, particularly during the global COVID-19 pandemic, societies worldwide have increasingly relied on information technology to facilitate communication and social interaction across various aspects of daily life. This trend has been especially pronounced among students and youth. Data from the National Socioeconomic Survey (Susenas), as reported by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in the Indonesian Youth Statistics 2021, indicate that approximately 95.57% of Indonesian youth use mobile phones, and around 90.17% have accessed the internet within the past three years (Riana Sari N., 2021). These figures demonstrate that digital and online platforms play a substantial role in shaping young people's mindsets, attitudes, and everyday behaviors.

Fourth, findings from several empirical studies further highlight the significant influence of the internet and social media in the contemporary information technology era. A 2020 survey conducted by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) at UIN Jakarta revealed that approximately 67.82% of respondents accessed the internet almost continuously, while 27.92% accessed it several times a day. Moreover, PPIM UIN Jakarta's 2021 survey indicated that levels of religious tolerance among students categorized as "very low" and "low" reached 30.16% of respondents (Afrimadona, Didin, & Abdallah, 2021). These findings underscore the urgency of strengthening initiatives that promote religious moderation, particularly within campus environments. Fifth, there has been a partial shift in the fragmentation of religious authority and modes of religious learning, moving away from traditional scholars and religious leaders toward religious information that is readily accessible through search engines such as Google and popular digital

platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and other social media channels. This transformation is particularly evident among younger generations and university students and has the potential to give rise to the phenomenon of “counter-moderation” in religious understanding, attitudes, and everyday practices.

One concrete manifestation of government policy related to long-term national development is the issuance of the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020–2024, which all government institutions are required to support and implement. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia plays a strategic role in reinforcing state ideology within this framework. Through the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) No. 18 of 2020, the Ministry established an institutional body known as the Center for Religious Harmony (*Pusat Kerukunan Umat Beragama*, PKUB), which operates in 34 provinces and 508 regencies/cities across Indonesia. This institutional initiative reflects the government’s commitment to fostering religious harmony and strengthening religious moderation nationwide. Within the context of higher education, State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs possess both policy responsibilities and strategic interests in shaping students’ religious understanding, attitudes, and behavior in accordance with the Ministry’s vision and mission, while simultaneously supporting broader national policy objectives. As representatives of state-owned higher education institutions, PTKIN are expected to develop into competitive and internationally recognized universities. To achieve this goal, several strategic measures may be undertaken, including: (1) enhancing both the quantity and quality of research publications produced by PTKIN; (2) delivering high-quality teaching services aligned with stakeholder needs; (3) strengthening institutional website development; (4) improving leadership capacity within PTKIN; (5) implementing principles of good university governance; (6) expanding institutional alliances and networks; (7) promoting internationalization; and (8) cultivating a strong and constructive campus culture (Fauzi, 2016).

As government-affiliated educational institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, PTKIN are therefore expected to take a leading role in ensuring the successful implementation of government policies, particularly those related to strengthening national identity and promoting religious moderation within campus environments. Consequently, studies focusing on nationalism, religious moderation, and policy implementation within PTKIN are crucial for advancing political education policies in Indonesia. Nevertheless, contemporary challenges persist, particularly the overwhelming influx of information from mass media, social media, and online sources, which disseminate diverse Islamic discourses and ideologies. Among these are narratives that promote intolerance and exclusivism, potentially contributing to the formation of extremist and radical patterns of religious thought, attitudes, and behavior. Another significant phenomenon that warrants further examination is the establishment of the Religious Moderation House (*Rumah Moderasi Beragama*, RMB) within the PTKIN environment. The RMB serves as an institutional manifestation of the government’s commitment to promoting religious moderation and countering radicalism across

campuses under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The Minister of Religious Affairs, Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, emphasized that efforts to institutionalize religious moderation require substantial contributions from PTKIN as centers for cultivating Islamic moderation. This statement was delivered during the Forum Group Discussion (FGD) of PTKIN Rectors from across Indonesia, themed “Strengthening Religious Moderation and Combating Radicalism–Terrorism,” held at IAIN Metro Lampung on December 17, 2021 (Kementerian Agama RI, 2021).

The establishment of the RMB is grounded in several key policy instruments issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These include: (1) Circular Letter of the Director General of Islamic Education No. B-3663.1/Dj.I/BA.02/10/2019 concerning the establishment of Religious Moderation Houses; (2) Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 7272 of 2019 on the Guidelines for the Implementation of Religious Moderation; and (3) Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 897 of 2021, which provides the Technical Guidelines for Religious Moderation Houses. The latter represents the most recent policy framework and explicitly aims to strengthen the institutionalization of religious moderation within Islamic higher education institutions. Collectively, these policies mandate that all higher education institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, both State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) and Private Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIS), establish an RMB as part of their academic and institutional structure (Podcast *Rumah Moderasi Beragama* IAIN Manado, 2021). At Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, a form of the RMB was officially inaugurated on October 26, 2020, under the name Center for the Study of Religious Moderation (Pusat Studi Moderasi Beragama, PSMB). According to Ahmad Ilyas, Head of the PSMB UIN Jakarta, the establishment of this center is intended to strengthen inclusive and tolerant religious understanding, with the broader aim of positioning UIN Jakarta as a national role model in the promotion of religious moderation. Furthermore, the PSMB seeks to foster mutual respect and compassion both within and across religious communities in Indonesia. Similarly, at UIN Sumatera Utara, the PSMB had been previously established and was formally inaugurated by the then Minister of Religious Affairs, Fachrul Razi, on December 9, 2020 (Kementerian Agama RI, 2020a; 2020b).

At IAIN Manado, the Religious Moderation House (RMB) was officially established on December 11, 2020, and functions as a semi-autonomous institutional unit responsible for promoting and internalizing the values of religious moderation within the campus community, including the dissemination of relevant research findings. The RMB collaborates closely with the Vice Rector III and supporting administrative units, particularly in the socialization of religious moderation during the implementation of the Introduction to Academic and Student Culture (PBAK). In addition, the RMB at IAIN Manado organizes workshops and facilitates the selection of “religious moderation ambassadors” from among student representatives. These initiatives were outlined by Mardan Umar, Secretary of the Religious Moderation House at IAIN Manado. One notable program implemented by the RMB is the organization of Religious Moderation Dialogues that involve religious leaders from across North Sulawesi, aimed at fostering interreligious

understanding and cooperation (Laya, 2020). The establishment and operationalization of the RMB or the Center for the Study of Religious Moderation (PSMB) are intended to strengthen the internalization of religious moderation values among students, including through formal academic activities such as PBAK. However, there remains a need for the development of comprehensive and standardized guidelines at the faculty level to ensure that the strengthening of religious moderation is systematic, measurable, and sustainable. To date, the RMB has not issued specific technical guidelines for the implementation of religious moderation programs targeting students. At UIN Sumatera Utara, the presence of the PSMB remains largely at an introductory stage and has yet to function optimally.

According to M. Rifa'i, Vice Dean III of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK) at UIN Sumatera Utara, the institution has not effectively implemented structured programs for strengthening religious moderation, particularly within student development activities.

Exploring the Perceptions of PTKIN Students

Before examining students' views on religious moderation in greater depth, it is essential to first discuss national insight (*wawasan kebangsaan*), which serves as a foundational framework for understanding the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of Indonesian society, including those within the campus environment. In this context, four principal pillars are examined: Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945), *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). These four pillars of national insight were selected based on policies implemented by various state agencies, institutions, and ministries within the framework of the NKRI. They are reflected in several official documents and policy instruments, including: (1) The Indonesian Defense White Paper issued by the Ministry of Defense; (2) the National Insight Test for Civil Servant Candidates (CPNS) administered by the National Civil Service Agency (2014); and (3) publications on national insight by the Financial Education and Training Agency (BPPK), Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia (2017). For instance, within the Digital Computer Assisted Test (CAT) for CPNS selection, it is emphasized that every Indonesian citizen, particularly prospective civil servants, must understand and internalize key elements of national insight, namely: Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and the NKRI.

When these four pillars of national insight are linked to student perceptions, it becomes possible to assess the extent to which students are influenced by the flow of information, educational exposure, and sociopolitical dynamics they encounter. Among these pillars, Pancasila occupies a central and strategic position in shaping national consciousness within the campus setting. Based on the analysis of field data, the majority of students within PTKIN campuses express agreement that Pancasila constitutes the fundamental basis for organizational life and social relations.

This finding indicates a positive tendency toward the consolidation of democratic values and the strengthening of religious moderation. Empirical findings regarding students' perceptions of the four pillars of state ideology are summarized in Table 1. Student responses were measured using a Likert scale consisting of five categories:

Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Neutral (N), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS).

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of the Four Pillars of National Insight (Data from three PTKIN campuses)*

Questions / Items	UIN Jakarta					UIN Sumatera Utara					IAIN Manado				
	SS	S	N	TS	STS	SS	S	N	TS	STS	SS	S	N	TS	STS
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Pancasila as the Organizational Principle and National Life.	61,8	34	4	0	0	55	40	4,7	0	0	52,7	44	3,2	0	0
	400	220	26	0	0	280	203	24	0	0	49	41	3	0	0
Pancasila is in harmony with all religious teachings in Indonesia.	42	41,1	15,6	1,2	0	26,7	54,2	16	2,6	0,6	42	45,2	12,9	0	0
	271	256	101	8	0	136	276	81	13	3	39	42	12	0	0
Islam is the religion closest to the meaning of the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, which contains "...One God".	35,4	36,8	22,6	4,5	0,8	41,1	40	14,7	3,3	1	33,3	46,2	15,1	5,4	0
	229	238	146	29	5	209	203	75	17	5	31	43	14	5	0
Rejecting the attitude of some people (groups) who oppose sharia (Islamic teachings) to the 1945 Constitution.	35,5	43,3	18	2,8	0,5	35,4	44,8	14,7	4,5	0,6	46,2	37,6	9,7	5,4	1,1
	230	280	116	18	3	180	228	75	23	3	43	35	9	5	1
Bhinneka Tunggal Ika includes all elements of religion, culture, ethnicity, race, and intergroup.	67,5	29,8	2,6	0	0	56,2	41,7	2	0	0	62,4	36,6	1,1	0	0
	437	193	17	0	0	286	212	10	0	0	58	34	1	0	0
Bhinneka Tunggal Ika means "convergent" to fellow Indonesians.	28	42,2	26	3,6	0,3	24	49,3	21	5,7	0	25,8	45,2	21,5	7,5	0
	181	273	168	23	2	122	251	107	29	0	24	42	20	7	0

The Republic of Indonesia is a final decision, so no amendments can be submitted.	21,6	38,3	34	6	0,2	19,3	43	29,3	7,5	1	14	46,2	18,3	21,5	0
Approve or support if the NKRI is changed to a "Federated State".	140	248	220	38	1	98	219	149	38	5	13	43	17	20	0
	2,5	5,6	27	44	20,9	5,1	8,1	24,8	49,3	12,8	2,2	7,5	29	49,5	11,8
	16	36	175	285	135	26	41	126	251	65	2	7	27	46	11

*Sources: (IAIN Manado 2021; UIN Jakarta 2021; UIN Sumatera Utara 2021).

Another important aspect of this study is the examination of the relationship between students' understanding and attitudes toward national insight and their responses to contemporary national and global issues. These issues include, among others, the discourse surrounding the establishment of an Islamic State of Indonesia, the relationship between the NKRI and transnational ideologies (such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Jamaah Islamiyah), the notion of Islamic global brotherhood in relation to Indonesian Islam, humanitarian donations, and other related concerns. The inclusion of these themes is particularly valuable for assessing and exploring the depth of national insight and religious understanding internalized by students across the three PTKIN campuses. By analyzing students' perceptions of these issues, this study seeks to identify how national ideology and religious moderation are negotiated within broader ideological, political, and global contexts. Detailed findings derived from the field data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. National Insight and Students' Responses to National and Global Issues (Data from three PTKIN campuses)*

Questions / Items	UIN Jakarta					UIN Sumatera Utara					IAIN Manado				
	SS	S	N	TS	STS	SS	S	N	TS	STS	SS	S	N	TS	STS
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Support religious (Islamic) groups that will establish the Islamic State of Indonesia.	2,5	4,9	14,4	41,3	37	4,5	12,6	19,4	40,3	23,2	32	20,4	16,1	37,6	22,6
	16	32	93	267	239	23	64	99	205	118	3	19	15	35	21
Supporting "Trans-National" religious ideologies (such as Al-	1,7	3,4	13,4	31,1	50,4	4,5	12,4	27,7	28,1	27,3	1,1	13	19,4	35,5	31,2
	11	22	87	201	326	23	63	141	143	139	1	12	18	33	29

Qaida, ISIS, JI, and others).																
More love of their ancestral country of origin (Arabic, Chinese, and others) even though they have settled and become Indonesian citizens.	2,2	4,3	41	35,7	16,8	4,1	13	41	34,4	7,7	1,1	24,7	31,2	39,8	3,2	
	14	28	265	231	109	21	66	208	175	39	1	23	29	37	3	
More defending the origin of the ancestral country (Arab, China, and others) in the event of war with Indonesia.	2,8	3,4	19,2	43	31,7	5,3	8,8	22,8	45,4	17,7	1,1	11,8	21,5	46,2	19,4	
	18	22	124	278	205	27	45	116	231	90	1	11	20	43	18	
Prioritizing "worldwide Muslim brotherhood" rather than "Indonesian Muslim brotherhood".	6,8	12,7	43,7	28	8,8	9,8	19,6	35	31	4,5	10,8	17,2	38,7	28	5,4	
	44	82	283	181	57	50	100	178	158	23	10	16	36	26	5	
Supporting the "humanitarian donation" program among Muslims in the world.	50	413	7,9	0,6	0,3	52,7	37,1	9	1	0	49,5	42	7,5	1,1	0	
	323	267	51	4	2	268	189	46	5	0	46	39	7	1	0	
Support the "military aid" program among Muslims in the world	41,1	42,3	15,1	0,9	0,5	45,4	40,5	12,2	1,4	0,6	47,3	39,8	11,8	1,1	0	
	266	274	98	6	3	231	206	62	7	3	44	37	11	1	0	

*Sources: (IAIN Manado 2021; UIN Jakarta 2021; UIN Sumatera Utara 2021).

Beyond PTKIN students' perspectives on the four main pillars of National Insight (Wawasan Kebangsaan) and various national-global issues, another important aspect of this study concerns the four indicators of Religious Moderation (RM) within PTKIN. Research on religious moderation in Islamic higher education institutions is closely linked to a set of key indicators that warrant further examination. According to the Religious

Moderation framework published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, there are four primary indicators of religious moderation: (1) national commitment, (2) tolerance, (3) non-violence, and (4) acceptance of local traditions (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021a, p. 41). These indicators provide an analytical lens through which the religious understandings and attitudes of the academic community can be assessed. Each indicator reflects essential dimensions of how religious beliefs are articulated and practiced within the campus environment, particularly in relation to pluralism, civic responsibility, and social harmony. The empirical data illustrating students' levels of understanding of these four indicators of religious moderation across the three PTKIN campuses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Understanding of Religious Moderation (RM)* (Data from three PTKIN campuses)**

Questions/items			
RM understanding	UIN Jakarta	UIN Sumatra Utara	IAIN Manado
- Middle way.	30.4 %	18.7%	9.7%
- Neutral.	38.5%	28.1%	33.3%
- Not excessive.	30%	16.7%	23.7%
- Not forcing.	46.7%	26%	34.4%
- Respect other religions.	75.6%	56.2%	60.2%
Importance of RM			
- By Islamic teachings.	26%	23.2%	18.3%
- Religious diversity is part of the facts of humanity.	47.6%	32.2%	36.6%
- Indonesia is a plural country with various religions.	78.4	60.3%	74.2%
- RM is the closest teaching to Islam.	24.3%	25.1%	22.6%

*Percentage with multiple answers

**Source: (IAIN Manado 2021; UIN Jakarta 2021; UIN Sumatera Utara 2021).

Regarding the indicators of Religious Moderation (RM), the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has identified four primary dimensions: (1) national commitment, (2) tolerance, (3) non-violence, and (4) acceptance of tradition (Ministry of Religious Affairs RI, 2021, p. 41). The empirical distribution of the data collected for these indicators is presented as follows:

Table 4. Four Religious Moderation (RM) Indicators* Data of three PTKIN campuses**

Questions/Items	UIN Jakarta	UIN Sumatera Utara	IAIN Manado
1. National Commitment			
- Proud to be Indonesian.	76.4%	67.4%	63.4%
- Considers other nations inferior.	1.4%	3%	1.1%
- Maintain the dignity and sovereignty of the nation.	79.6%	64.8%	75.3%
- Not calm if other nations are advancing.	1.2%	0.8%	1.1%

- حب الوطن من الإيمان (love for the motherland is part of faith).	71%	65%	59.1%
- Support military aggression and expansion into other countries.	3.2%	9.2%	4.3%
- More concerned with the state than individuals and groups.	27.5%	14.3%	9.7%
- Instill an attitude of defending the country and the nation.	82%	67.2%	72%
2. Religious tolerance			
<i>a. Tolerance in religious differences</i>			
- Respect for religious differences.	86.2%	75.8%	81.7%
- Respect the beliefs of other religions.	82.8%	73.1%	73.1%
- Believing in one's own religious beliefs without the need to respect other religious beliefs.	2.5%	2.4%	1.1%
- Still respect people of different religions without the need to get along.	3.4%	3.1%	3.2%
- Including anti-tolerance is not obeying leaders of different religions.	63.1%	45.4%	36.6%
<i>b. Tolerance in different sects/mazhabs among Muslims</i>			
- Still respecting the differences in the sects/mazhabs they adhere to.	95.7%	94.1%	92.5%
- Lack of respect for the choice of sect /sect adhered to.	1.7%	2.2%	1.1%
- It doesn't matter because the important thing is fellow Muslims.	10%	4.3%	11.8%
- Trying to convince others that my school/school is better	3.6%	7.3%	5.4%
<i>c. Interaction socialize with non-Muslims</i>			
- Feel uncomfortable when associating with someone or a group of different religions.	3.2%	6.5%	0
- It's normal to associate with someone or an association with a different religious belief.	85.6%	80%	90.3%
- Not accustomed to associating with a person or association of different religions	4%	4.3%	0
- There is nothing wrong with associating with people/groups of different religions, as long as it is not related to faith.	55%	54.8%	54.8%
<i>d. Development Non-Muslim House of Worship</i>			

- Questioning the permit to build a non-Muslim house of worship amid a Muslim majority.	79%	80%	87.1%
- If there are only a few followers, there is no need to build houses of worship in the majority Muslim community.	26%	29.7%	21.5%
- Inviting the Muslim community to demonstrate.	2.6%	4.3%	2.2%
- If it does not meet the requirements must be forcibly demolished.	2%	2.2%	1.1%
<i>e. The use of loudspeakers to call to prayer amidst the majority of non-Muslims</i>			
- There is no problem with the sound of the call to prayer because Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia.	28%	40%	41%
- Do not direct the call to prayer amid a non-Muslim majority.	33.5%	25.7%	13%
- It is better if the mosque administrators ask permission from community representatives	28.6%	13.8%	13%
- The sound of the call to prayer is an icon, only for a moment, and is not intended to disturb.	59.4%	64%	67.7%
3. Anti-Violence			
<i>a. Understanding of non-violence</i>			
- Do not use violence against other groups of different religions.	85%	77%	71%
- Do not impose your will even though groups of different religions refuse.	62.3%	48.7%	53.8%
- Occasionally being tough on groups of different beliefs.	5.6%	6%	7.5%
- The concept of non-violence is part of the principle of "rahmatan lil alamin".	42.7%	29.1%	27%
<i>b. Insulting Islam and the Prophet SAW</i>			
- Just ignore it.	2.6%	3%	1.1%
- Invited to dialogue and given advice gently.	82.5%	66.8%	66.7%
- Was given a heavy penalty.	13%	21.4%	15.1%
- Beaten and if necessary killed.	7%	9.2%	7.5%
- Turned over to the authorities.	51.5%	59.1%	58.1%
<i>c. Attitude against sellers of khamer and other illicit goods</i>			
- Just ignore it.	3.7%	3.5%	1.1%
- Raided and destroyed.	15.3%	23.2%	8.6%

- The seller and the owner were arrested and judged in a mob.	20.6%	28.3%	41%
- Reported to the authorities.	91.8%	89.2%	89.2%
4. Acceptance of Tradition			
Have attended local religious rituals or traditions	95.4%	95.5%	95.7%
<i>a. Followed local religious traditions</i>			
- Tahlilan	82%	56.2%	70%
- Maulid Nabi SAW	92%	93%	90.3%
- Barzanji or Diba reading	31.4%	15%	29%
- Manaqib reading	19.8%	2.8%	4.3%
- Kupatan	6%	1.8%	8.6%
- Sekaten	1.5%	0.6%	0
- Tabot	0.5%	0	0
<i>b. View to local religious traditions</i>			
- It needs to be treated as part of the wealth of Indonesian Islamic tradition.	80.5%	78%	76.3%
- It doesn't matter because some local traditions are against sharia.	6%	10%	5.4%
- It doesn't matter because it only costs money.	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%
- Local religious traditions have become one of the nation's unifying media.	50.2%	34%	36.6%

*Percentage with multiple answers.

**Source: (IAIN Manado 2021; UIN Jakarta 2021; UIN Sumatera Utara 2021).

Based on the data presented above, the majority of students across the three PTKIN campuses demonstrate highly positive perceptions and attitudes aligned with the principles of Religious Moderation (RM). However, a small proportion of students exhibited differing or contradictory understandings and attitudes. Several factors may account for these variations: (1) limited knowledge of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution; (2) insufficient socialization of the four pillars of National Insight (WK) and RM within the PTKIN environment; (3) the influence of specific doctrinal, ideological, or political motivations; (4) subjective knowledge and personal experiences; and (5) exposure to external ideologies disseminated globally through digital media and social networks, which may shape beliefs and behaviors beyond the domestic context.

The Dynamics of Religious Moderation in the Campus Environment

Indonesia's religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity represents a substantial form of social capital that can strengthen social cohesion and national integration when managed inclusively. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of students across the three PTKIN campuses demonstrate moderate, inclusive, and tolerant religious attitudes. This result is consistent with previous international and national studies emphasizing the role of higher education institutions in fostering religious moderation among youth in plural societies (Azra, 2017; Berger, 2018).

Internationally, studies have shown that universities function as critical spaces for the formation of moderate religious identities through dialogue, civic education, and exposure to diversity. Berger (2018) argues that religious moderation among students emerges from continuous engagement with pluralistic values rather than from rigid doctrinal transmission. Similarly, Roy (2017) highlights that deviations toward radical or counter-moderate views among young people are often driven by identity struggles and exposure to transnational ideological narratives disseminated through global digital networks. The present study supports these findings, as students who exhibited non-moderate tendencies were influenced by limited civic knowledge, subjective religious interpretations, and external ideological exposure through social media.

From a national perspective, this study aligns with Azra's (2017) assertion that Indonesian Islam is inherently moderate but remains vulnerable to ideological disruption without sustained educational reinforcement. Likewise, Huda et al. (2017) emphasize that integrating local wisdom and national values into Islamic education strengthens students' commitment to moderation and social harmony. However, the present study extends these findings by demonstrating that moderation within PTKIN campuses is not uniform but varies depending on institutional commitment, campus culture, and policy implementation.

The influence of globalization and digital media constitutes a critical point of comparison between this study and previous research. Nasir and Lian (2021) found that limited digital literacy and critical thinking skills among students increase vulnerability to ideological extremism. Similarly, Sari and Setiawan (2020) reported that insufficient digital competence among educators and students may hinder the development of balanced religious perspectives. Consistent with these findings, this study reveals that rapid access to information when not accompanied by critical academic guidance can lead to distorted religious understandings among a small segment of students.

Regarding the issue of veil-wearing, the findings of this study corroborate earlier national and international research cautioning against simplistic associations between religious attire and radical ideology. Nisa (2020) demonstrates that veiling practices among Indonesian university students are shaped by identity negotiation, peer influence, and personal piety rather than by extremist beliefs. This study confirms that veil-wearing across the three PTKIN campuses cannot be used as an indicator of radicalism. However, this research contributes new insight by situating the practice of veiling within the framework of higher education policy, particularly the uneven implementation of the Ministry of Religion's Decree No. 102 of 2019.

While the decree promotes humane and andragogical learning interactions, its application varies significantly across campuses. This finding is consistent with Rahman (2018), who argues that institutional interpretation often mediates the implementation of religious regulations in Islamic higher education. The present study further demonstrates that faculty-level professional ethics—such as medical ethics at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta play a more decisive role in regulating student behavior than centralized institutional policies.

Compared to previous studies, this research offers a more comprehensive contribution by examining multiple PTKIN campuses with distinct socio-religious contexts. The findings suggest that the successful promotion of religious moderation in Islamic higher education depends not only on formal regulations but also on sustained mentoring, critical civic education, digital literacy, and institutional consistency. These elements are essential for countering transnational ideological influences and ensuring that students develop inclusive, tolerant, and nationally aligned religious identities.

Conclusion

Although the data and observations obtained are still preliminary and reflect only an initial stage of research, this study provides valuable baseline information on the diversity of students' understanding and religious attitudes within the campus environment. Moreover, the pervasive influence of information technology (IT) and digital media in daily life, including among students, cannot be overlooked. Online information, unrestricted by space or time, has the potential to shape or alter students' religious perspectives and attitudes. Consequently, both internal factors (within the campus) and external factors (outside the campus) exert significant influence in shaping students' character, attitudes, and behavior, whether toward moderation or counter-moderation. Findings from the field highlight the potential, opportunities, and challenges associated with the implementation of educational political policies in fostering Religious Moderation across various campuses under the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. These policies are instrumental in identifying and addressing challenges faced by students, both internal (campus-based) and external (society-based). Accordingly, campuses are expected to map and strategize around these potentials, opportunities, and challenges to effectively strengthen religious moderation and counter radicalism among students. Ultimately, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Religion, holds both the interest and responsibility to implement educational policies that uphold the state ideology among PTKIN students. Strategic policy development is therefore essential to cultivate students' character, enhance their competitiveness in navigating future societal changes, and ensure the maintenance of moderate Islamic values (*wasatīyyah*) in the broader life of the nation and state.

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Ethical Statement

This research followed ethical guidelines in research to protect the rights of the research subjects, including confidentiality in providing responses to the questionnaires received. This research not allowed structural officials on campus among the participants

who completed the questionnaires, therefore, did not require restrictions or confidentiality. Furthermore, the data in this research is intended solely to enrich the existing data and facts in the field and serve as a reference for public policymaking.

CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

- **Author 1:** Developed the concept, strengthened the argument, and provided data guidance to the research team.
- **Authors 2 and 3:** Processed and analyzed data in the field.
- **Author 4:** Translated the manuscript.
- **Author 5:** Proofread the manuscript.
- **Author 6:** Coordinated the research assistant team in the field.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in publication of this research.

Data Availability

This research provides an opportunity for future researchers to further explore religious moderation in the context of campus life. Furthermore, this data also presents numerous field findings related to the implementation of religious moderation policies, thus benefiting policymakers and leaders in raising awareness of the importance of religious moderation within the campus community. Of course, the availability of this data can also be utilized by the general public.

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