The Paradigm of Religious Moderation: Interpreting the Concept and Characteristics

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Religious moderation must be understood contextually not textually, meaning that moderation in religion in Indonesia is not a moderate Indonesia, but an understanding of religion must be moderate. The purpose of this research is to find out the basic concepts of religious moderation and the characteristics contained in it. This type of research uses a descriptive qualitative, research method uses a literature review. The data collection method uses documentation. Researchers use content analysis techniques. The results concluded that religious moderation provides an understanding that as a Muslim tolerating fellow religious people, and not discriminating between races, ethnicities, and religions, also teaches how we think dynamically and innovatively. This moderation concept will bring Indonesia in a better direction, so that there is no discrimination in diversity and creates a sense of security and comfort. This research contributes as enrichment material and knowledge information for readers and academics related to the urgency of the concept (paradigm) of religious moderation and its implications in everyday life.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that has the largest Muslim population in the world and is an important spotlight. Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world and is the main target in terms of Islamic moderation (Yulianto, 2020). Moderation is a basic principle of Islam. Moderate Islam is a religious understanding that is very relevant in the context of diversity in all aspects, including religion, customs, ethnicity, and the nation itself (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019). Of the various types of diversity that the Indonesian state has, religious diversity is the most powerful in shaping radicalism in Indonesia. The emergence of extreme groups that are increasingly spreading their wings is caused by various factors such as the sensitivity of religious life, the entry of extreme groups from abroad, and even political and governmental problems. So, amid this radicalism problem, a term called "Religious Moderation" emerged (Karim, 2019).

Religious moderation must be understood contextually not textually, meaning that moderation in religion in Indonesia is not moderate in Indonesia, but an understanding of religion must be moderate because Indonesia has many cultures, cultures, and customs (Winata et al., 2020). This Islamic moderation can answer various problems of religion and global civilization (Harto & Tastin, 2019). No less important is that moderate Muslims can respond loudly, accompanied by peaceful actions with radical and extremist-based groups that do everything by force and violence.

Islam and Muslims today face at least two challenges; First, the tendency of some Muslims to be extreme and strict in their understanding of religious texts and try to apply these methods in Muslim societies, even with violence and coercion. Second, another tendency that is also extreme by being relaxed in religion and submitting to negative behaviors and thoughts that come from other cultures and civilizations (Hanifatulloh, 2021). In their efforts, they quote from religious texts such as the Al_Qur'an, hadith, and the works of classical scholars as the basis and framework of thought, but by understanding them textually and regardless of historical context (Ajib, 2019). So they look like a generation that was born late because they live in a modern society but have the thinking patterns of the previous generation. Plurality or diversity is an absolute thing in this life. It is a sunatullah that can be seen in this nature (Saputra & Azmi, 2022). Allah Swt created this nature on the Sunnah of heterogeneity within a framework of unity. In the context of human unity, we can know how Allah Swt created various tribes and nations. As part of the unity of a nation, Allah Swt, created various ethnicities, tribes, and groups. As part of the unity of a language, Allah Swt created various dialects. As part of the unity of the Shari'ah, Allah created the various schools of thought of the Imams as a result of their ijtihad. Within the framework of the unity of the people (ummatan wahidah), Allah Swt created various religions, diversity in religion is sunnatullah so its existence cannot be denied (Noer, 2019).

Religious conflicts can be triggered due to a high sense of superiority towards the religion that is adhered to, positioning other religions lower than their religion, lack of tolerance between religious communities, differences in stance and feelings between individuals, cultural differences, and others (Yunus, 2014). Religious pluralism has always been debated because people have not fully understood the meaning of religious pluralism to coexist with adherents of other religions. This problem is a challenge for every religious believer in understanding plurality to achieve a life that is harmonious, harmonious, and has a high sense of tolerance.

Understanding and teaching religious moderation is the duty of every individual. But institutions are also not free from this. One of them is the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which takes part in the application of religious moderation. Social experts say the emergence of conflict is due to social, economic, and political relations, which are rooted in sources of ownership, social status, and power, which are very limited in number, resulting in uneven distribution in society (Mujahiddin & Mahardika, 2018). However, not everyone understands and accepts the teaching of what religious moderation is. The Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs must instill an attitude of religious moderation. In the process of implementing religious moderation, communication tactics or strategies are needed. Communication strategy is the overall communication planning with communication management to achieve predetermined goals (Fathoni, 2017). Determining the communication strategy is very important, to determine the success of communication activities. In facing the plurality and diversity of society, the most powerful weapon to regulate clashes and radicalism is moderate and inclusive Islamic education (Muchith, 2016).In addition, the teachings of Islam as rahmatan lil alamin, mercy for all the universe.Wasathiyah Islam or which means "Middle Islam" is something that materializes the best ummah (khairu ummah) (Fitri, 2015; Amar, 2018; Anwarudin, 2020). Allah Swt made Muslims the middle (wasath) in all religious matters, such as in terms of prophethood, sharia, and others.

The understanding and practice of Wasathiyah Islamic religious practice (Ilmiah & Sujanah, 2020) has several characteristics, including Tawassuth (moderate), Tawazun (balanced), I'tidâl (straight and firm), Tasamuh (tolerant), Musawah (egalitarian and non-discrimination), Aulawiyah (prioritizing priorities), Tahaddhur (civilized), Tathawwur wa Ibtikar (dynamic, creative, and innovative). The concept is expected to be able to be applied in the life of the state and nation. So that the concept of moderation can bring Indonesia in a better direction, so that there is no discrimination in diversity and creates a sense of security and comfort (Hafizd, 2022).

Religious moderation becomes a middle way when there is tension between each individual or different groups to remain balanced (Samsul, 2020). With religious moderation, a person is not extreme and not excessive when undergoing the teachings of his religion. Extreme people are often trapped in religious practices in the name of Allah Swt only to defend His majesty by putting aside the human aspect. He will be willing to kill fellow humans in the name of Allah Swt even though protecting humanity is a religious teaching. Therefore, religious moderation teaches a fair and balanced attitude. Fair means putting everything in its place while carrying it out as well and as quickly as possible. And balanced means always being between two sides. Religious moderation is a balanced religious attitude between practicing one's religion (exclusive) and respecting the religious practices of others who have different beliefs (inclusive). Religious moderation is the key to creating tolerance and harmony between religions. Religious moderation is a middle attitude, which still carries out orders according to the teachings of their religion, but does not denigrate the teachings of other religions.

Starting from the preliminary study above, the purpose of this research is to find out the basic concepts of religious moderation and the characteristics contained in it. The focus of the research examines (1) what is religious moderation; (2) what are the characteristics of religious moderation. The implications of this research can be input and evaluation for the Ministry of Religion in implementing a program to strengthen religious moderation. And for the campus itself, it is useful in shaping the attitude of religious moderation of students in the campus environment.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This type of research uses descriptive qualitative, research to recap a lot of data that researchers get from journals and books both in print and electronically. Researchers use a descriptive approach because researchers present phenomena that are happening in real life. Qualitative research is used to obtain in-depth data, data that contains meaning. Meaning is the real data, definite data which is a value behind the visible data. Qualitative research when faced with plural objects will be easier, and this method is more sensitive and more able to adjust to many sharpening joint influences on the patterns of value faced (Moleong, 2009).

The research method uses a literature review, researchers attempt to examine the theories that are relevant to research problems. In this section, an assessment is made of the concepts and theories used based on the available literature, especially from articles published in various scientific journals. The literature review serves to build concepts or theories that form the basis of study in research. A literature review or literature study is an activity required in research, especially academic research whose main purpose is to develop theoretical aspects and aspects of practical benefits (Sukardi, 2013). So that by using this research method the researcher can easily solve the problem to be studied.

2.2 Data Source

The data collection method uses documentation, so it is the document or record that is the data source, while the contents of the record are the research subject or research variable. The data sources in this study are written data sources found in libraries (library research) such as books and printed and electronic journals. The data collection technique in this research is documentation, namely documenting all written data that has the suitability of the research theme, this documentation is used as authentic evidence that can be used as a research source.

2.3 Data Analysis

Researchers use content analysis techniques, namely research analysis which is an in-depth discussion of the contents of written or printed information. Content analysis is a research technique for making conclusions (the process of concluding based on previous considerations or general considerations; conclusions) that can be reflected and validated by paying attention to the context. Content analysis can be used to analyze all forms of documentation material that researchers have collected. The steps used in the content analysis are described below:

1) Determination of the research design or model. Here several media are determined, comparative or correlation analysis, many or few objects, and so on;
2) Searching for main data or primary data, namely the text itself. As a content analysis, the text is the main, even the main object. The search can be carried out using certain observation forms that are deliberately made to search for these data;
3) The search for contextual knowledge so that the research carried out does not exist in a vacuum but is seen to be related to other factors.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Concepts and Characteristics of Religious Moderation

3.1.1 Moderation

Moderation is known as wasath or wasathiyah, which has the same meaning as the words tawassuth (middle), i'tidal (fair), and tawazun (balanced). People who apply wasathiyah principles can be called wasith.In Arabic, the word wasathiyah means "the best choice" (Husna, 2021). Whatever words are used, they all imply the same meaning, namely

fairness, which in this context means choosing a middle-ground position between various extreme options. Moderation is an attitude and view that is not excessive, not extreme, and not radical (tatharruf).Based on Q.S. al-Baqarah: 143 which refers to the understanding that moderation here explains the superiority of Muslims over other nations. In what ways? The Al_Qur'an teaches a balance between the human need for spirituality or the inner demand for Allah Swt presence, as well as balancing the human demand for material needs. As mentioned in the hadith, there was a group of people who came to the Prophet Muhammad to show that they were strong worshipers, until they did not get married. The Prophet replied that what is right is the balance between worship and material fulfillment. That is his Sunnah. In terms of morals, the Al_Qur'an also teaches balance, such as emphasizing moderation. A person does not need to be too generous by giving away his wealth so that he becomes bankrupt and has nothing. However, he should also not be miserly and too stingy, so that he only becomes rich himself, because, in the wealth we have, there is wealth for people in need. Thus, the message is conveyed in the verse of the Al_Qur'an. Second, moderation is a synergy between justice and goodness. The essence of this message is taken from the Al_Qur'anic interpreters' explanation of the expression ummatan wasathan (Nurdin, 2021). According to them, the meaning of this expression is that Muslims are people who can be fair and are people of good behavior.

3.1.2 Religious

Religious means adhering to or embracing religion. To be religious means to worship, to obey religion; to live a good life (according to religion). Religion is spreading peace, spreading love, anytime anywhere, and to anyone. Religion is not to homogenize diversity but to understand various diversities with wisdom. Religion is present in our midst so that our human dignity is always guaranteed and protected (Sari et al., 2021). Therefore, do not use religion as a tool to negate and demean each other and negate one another. Therefore, let's always spread peace with anyone, anywhere and anytime. Religion is guarding, guarding the heart, guarding personal behavior, guarding the whole country, and guarding this universe. So religious moderation is our perspective on religion in a moderate manner, namely understanding and practicing religious teachings without extremes, either extreme right or extreme left. Extremism, radicalism, hate speech, and fractured inter-religious relations are problems faced by the Indonesian people today.

3.1.3 Characteristics of Religious Moderation

One source of conflict that can destabilize the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is a religious conflict. Religious motives will destabilize the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia because it is accompanied by the meaning of "holy war". In empirical reality, the conflict is drawn into the level of truth claims and holy wars in the name of Allah Swt which will lead to bloody horizontal conflicts. The truth claim of religious understanding that is exclusive, extreme, and absolute becomes the root of the conflict between fellow Muslims. Truth claim occurs in two Islamic areas, first in the scope of differences in understanding that are variati-fiqhiyyah. Second, in the aspect of deviation, misguided understanding or teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to have a paradigm of understanding Islam that can strengthen ukhuwwah Islamiyyah, wathaniyyah, and insaniyyah, one of which is the Islamic moderation approach. The word moderation is known as wasath or wasathiyah, which has the same meaning as the words tawassuth (middle), i'tidal (fair), and tawazun (balanced). People who apply wasathiyah principles can be called wasith (Hefni, 2020).

In Arabic too, the word wasathiyah is defined as "the best choice". The word al-wasathiyah in Arabic is from the word al-wasath which is translated linguistically as the middle. Thus, wasathiyah manhaj is often interpreted as a middle opinion between two or more different opinions and is often also considered a moderate opinion. In Mufradât Al-fâzh Al_Qur'ân Raghib Al-Isfahani mentions that the word wasath means, "Something that has two ends of comparable size". This word is also found in Q.S. Al-Baqarah.

3.1.4 Tawassuth (Moderate)

Tawassuth is a neutral attitude based on the principle of life upholding the value of justice in the middle of life together, neither extreme left nor extreme right. This attitude is also known as moderate (al-wasathiyyah).In some literature, it is stated that tawassuth/moderate comes from the word wasath which means fair, good, middle, and balanced. This means that a Muslim who is tawassuth will place himself in the middle of a matter, neither extreme right nor left (Bustomi & Zuhairi, 2021). Quoting the book Moderation of Islam Nusantara, there are five reasons why tawassuth is recommended for Muslims, namely:

1) The attitude of tawassuth is considered a middle way in solving problems, so a Muslim always views tawassuth as the fairest attitude in understanding religion.
2) The essence of Islamic teachings is compassion, so a Muslim who behaves tawassuth always prioritizes peace and avoids disputes.
3) Followers of other religions are also creatures of Allah Swt's creation that must be valued and respected, so a Muslim who behaves tawassuth always views and treats them fairly and equally.
4) Islamic teachings encourage democracy to be an alternative to realizing human values, so Muslims who behave tawassuth always prioritize human values and democracy.
5) Islam prohibits discrimination against individuals or groups. So it is appropriate for a Muslim who is tawassuth to always uphold equality.

From these five reasons, a Muslim should already understand the importance of tawassuth in his life. Tawassuth is suitable to be applied in social life between fellow human beings. Especially in the present time which is full of problems of intolerance and discrimination between religious communities. The examples of tawassuth in everyday life are:

1) Not discriminating between groups in interaction and communication.
2) Keeping in touch with each other so that disputes do not arise.
3) Accept the opinions of others who do not agree.4) Accepting suggestions, input, and constructive criticism from others.
4) Use polite and soothing language when communicating.
5) Being tolerant of all differences that exist.

3.1.5 Tawazun (balance)

Tawazun is an attitude that can balance one's self when choosing something as needed, without leaning or being one-sided towards a matter. In the context of religious moderation, this attitude is very important in interfaith life, so we can be balanced in the life of the world, but we can also be balanced in the afterlife. The attitude of tawazun is needed by humans so that they do not do something excessive and put aside other things, which have the right to be fulfilled. Tawazun is the ability of an individual to balance his life in various dimensions, thus creating a stable, healthy, safe, and comfortable condition.

This tawazun attitude is very important in the life of an individual as a human being (Rifaâ et al., 2017). Therefore, this tawazun attitude must be applied and implemented in students; so that they can do everything in balance in their lives. Because if you ignore the attitude of tawazun in this life, various problems will be born. In life, there is always an incident where someone is only concerned with worldly affairs or has the principle of his life only to seek worldly pleasure. The behavior he does in his daily activities it becomes a habit and is considered a common thing in his association. Such as smoking, forgetting to pray, committing sins; or fulfilling needs excessively, such as eating excessively, sleeping without time, or laziness. This kind of behavior is a persistent tendency towards negativity. While the tendency is constantly towards positive things; for example, someone who constantly performs worship by locking himself up, and does not care about the surrounding social environment.

Examples of tawazun attitudes from the Prophet Muhammad, such as:

The Prophet Muhammad Saw was a person whose faith was very strong, a zuhud, and good at war strategy in defense of Islam, but, in family life, he became a very good family leader, loving his wife and children. That is the attitude of tawazun that we can make guidelines from the Prophet Muhammad Saw.

Examples of tawazun attitude in everyday life, such as a mother who has two children, one is still in elementary school, while the other is in college. Surely the mother will not give the same amount of pocket money to each of her children. If the mother

3.1.6 I'tidal (straight and firm)

The word I'tidal means straight and firm, meaning putting things in their place, exercising rights, and fulfilling obligations proportionally. Islam prioritizes justice for all parties. Many verses of the Al_Qur'an indicate this noble teaching, without prioritizing justice, religious values feel dry and meaningless because justice is a religious teaching that directly affects the needs of the community. Without it, prosperity and welfare will only be an illusion (Maarif, 2017).

I'tidal is very necessary for life because, without it, everything will lead to an understanding of Islam that is too liberal or radical. The role of educators in moderating Islamic education is needed for a straight, honest, and firm understanding of religion.

Examples of I'tidal attitudes in everyday life are:
1) Someone who always obeys the rules in the scope of society, school, and family.
2) A teacher who gives fair assignments and grades to all students.
3) School fees and tuition fees are charged fairly to students and college students.
4) Always upholding the truth within the community, school, and family.
5) Never shake or lose enthusiasm in upholding justice and truth.

3.1.7 Tasamuh (tolerant)

Tasamuh comes from Arabic which means tolerance. According to the language Tasamuh means tolerance, while according to the term mutual respect and appreciation between one human being and another (Jamarudin, 2016). Examples of tasamuh actions in everyday life:
1) Be generous in accepting all differences.
2) Giving other people the freedom to choose a belief (religion).
3) Respect other people who are worshiping.
4) Continue to get along and be good with people who have different beliefs in worldly matters.
5) Not forcing others in terms of belief (religion).
6) Not hating and hurting the feelings of someone who has different beliefs or opinions from us.
7) Not disturbing other people of different beliefs when they worship.

3.1.8 Musawah (egalitarian and non-discrimination)

Musawah is not discriminating against others due to differences in beliefs or religions, traditions, and origins. In language, musawah means parity or equality. This means that neither party feels superior to the other so that it can impose its will (Raka, 2018). In state affairs, the ruler cannot impose his will on the people, and be authoritarian and exploitative. This is because the people and the ruler have the same position and rights that must be respected. In a general context, musawah can be associated with harmony between communities. With musawah, discrimination between communities will not occur.

Examples of musawah actions in daily life:
1) Appreciate the differences in ethnicity, religion, race, and group that exist around us.
2) Not forcing the will of others to follow the teachings of our religion.
3) Always forgive the mistakes of others even though the person has not apologized.
4) Be friendly to anyone.
5) Not discriminating or discriminating against friends, especially those of different faiths.

3.1.9 Aulawiyah (prioritizing the priority)

Aulawiyah (prioritizing priorities) is the ability to identify things that are more important to be prioritized for implementation compared to those of lesser importance (Nur, 2015). If in our daily lives we find clashes in charity, for example, to determine priorities in charity, we should not only rely on logic, lust, and analysis of facts, or rely on the benefits and harms of a case. If there is a clash in charity, how to prioritize? If mubah meets Sunnah, then the sunnah must take precedence, if sunnah meets wajib, then the wajib must take precedence, but if wajib meets wajib we see the form of fardhu 'ain and kifayah that takes precedence, and so on. For example, in everyday life, we often encounter clashes such as:
1) We have limited money, while we also have a family that we must support, on the one hand, we have debts to people that must be repaid, which one should be prioritized? The top priority is to provide for the family.
2) Facing the Qibla is an obligation. If you have tried but still do not know the direction of the Qibla, you must pray according to the direction you think is the direction of the Qibla. So keep praying.
3) If there is no food in the forest except by hunting pigs, then eating pigs just to survive must be done.

3.1.10 Tahaddhur (civilized)

Tahadhdhur (civilized) is upholding akhlakul karimah, character, identity, and integrity as khairu ummah in the life of humanity and civilization. Humans are social creatures. Humans cannot live alone in the world without other people around. Doing good and helping is something that must be done to create a harmonious and peaceful life between fellow humans. Tahaddhur in the life of the state and nation is very much needed, because with this attitude, all activities of our hands, we, and our eyes will be well maintained (Aini, 2021). Now we witness many issues circulating among people who are accustomed to disseminating information without first checking the truth and facts and we also witness frequent debates between individuals on a matter that they do not understand and have qualified knowledge in this matter. Seeing the situation and conditions, the moderation of Islamic education in Tahaddhur is needed so that the life of the nation and state creates harmony and security, and tranquility in social life.

3.1.11 Tathawwur wa Ibtikar (dynamic, Creative, And Innovative)

Tathawwur wa Ibtikar (dynamic and innovative) is always open to making changes by the times and creating new things for the benefit and progress of mankind. The definition of Tathawwur wa Ibtikar (dynamic and innovative) is: always open to making changes by the times and creating new things for the benefit and progress of mankind. Tathawwur wa Ibtikar (dynamic and innovative) in the moderation of Islamic education is very much needed because it is a strategy that is structured in such a way as to answer various kinds of problems and current conditions that must be faced by everyone (Karim, 2019). Progress in the fields of science and technology is increasingly dynamic and sustainable as a result of modernization and globalization. Moderation of Islamic education requires Tathawwur wa Ibtikar to answer various kinds of problems that occur in society.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Based on the results and discussion of the research, the following researchers describe the implications and contributions of this research:
1) Theoretical benefits: provide insight and knowledge in applying and understanding the attitude of religious moderation and facilitate research on Communication Strategies. 2) Practical benefits: expected to be input and evaluation for the Ministry of Religion in implementing a program to strengthen religious moderation. And for the campus itself, it is useful in shaping the attitude of religious moderation of students in the campus environment.
2) The concept of religious moderation needs to be formulated precisely, with several indicators that are agreed upon and well understood in the perspective of religions, so that religious practitioners of each religion have the same perspective and perception of religious moderation, both conceptually and praxis so that it can be conveyed appropriately to the wider community.
3) The concept of Religious Moderation needs to be internalized in a structured manner to students in every religious education institution all religions, from primary, secondary to higher education levels. The curriculum and teaching materials used in each educational unit need to adapt the content of religious moderation education so that students have the same understanding of the meaning of religious moderation.
4) Socialization of religious moderation needs to be carried out continuously to the wider community by involving religious teachers, religious instructors, and other religious practitioners, either through workshops, religious studies, social media, and printed media (pocketbooks).

5. RESEARCH LIMITATION

The limitations of this study are that researchers only analyze the basic concepts and characteristics of religious moderation so it is more directed at theoretical reviews. Therefore, it is expected that further research can conduct research with a focus on the implementation of religious moderation in community life. Another limitation is that this research only focuses on religious moderation from the perspective of Islam, so further researchers can conduct reviews on other religious perspectives.

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6. CONCLUSION

Religious moderation is a moderate way of looking at religion, namely understanding and practicing religious teachings without extremes, either extreme right or extreme left. Extremism, radicalism, hate speech, and fractured inter-religious relations are problems faced by the Indonesian people today. Religious moderation teaches us how to view our religious life in a good and correct way, not extreme or radical. Religious moderation provides an

understanding that as a Muslim to tolerate fellow religious people, not discriminating between races, tribes, and religions, and also teaches how we think dynamically and innovatively. In facing the plurality and diversity of society, the most powerful weapon to regulate clashes and radicalism is moderate and inclusive Islamic education. In addition, the teachings of Islam as rahmatan lil alamin, mercy for all the universe.

Wasathiyah Islam or which means "Middle Islam" is something that materializes the best ummah (khairu ummah). Allah Swt made Muslims middle (wasath) in all religious matters, such as in terms of prophethood, sharia, and others. The understanding and practice of Wasathiyah Islamic religious practice have several characteristics, including Tawassuth (moderate), Tawazun (balance), I'tidâl (straight and firm), Tasamuh (tolerant), Musawah (egalitarian and non-discrimination), Aulawiyah (prioritizing priorities), Tahaddhur (civilized), Tathawwur wa Ibtikar (dynamic, creative, and innovative). The concept is expected to be able to be applied in the life of the state and nation. So that this moderation concept will bring Indonesia in a better direction so that there is no discrimination in diversity and create a sense of security and comfort.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Researchers are responsible for all the authenticity and information of the research data that researchers have described in this article. Each researcher performed their duties well and was able to complete them according to the target during the process of collecting data and reporting research results.

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